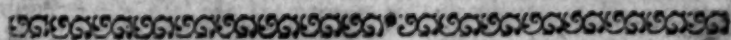


A
R E V I E W
OF THE IMPORTANT
CONTROVERSY
CONCERNING
MIRACLES,
&c. &c.



THE HISTORY OF THE

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A
R E V I E W
OF THE IMPORTANT
CONTROVERSY
CONCERNING
MIRACLES,
AND THE
PROTESTANT Systems relative to it.

To which is ADDED
A LETTER;
With some REMARKS on a late Perform-
ance, Called
The CRITERION,
OR
MIRACLES EXAMINED.

L O N D O N,
Printed for M. NEEDHAM, *Holbourn.*

REVIEWS
OF THE
CONTROVERSY
CONCERNING
MIRACLES

AND THE
PROTESTANT BELIEF
TO WHICH IS ADDED

A LETTER
WITH SOME REMARKS ON A LATE PUBLICATION



THE CRITIC
OR
MIRACLES EXAMINED.

LONDON:
Printed for M. Newman.



THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
READER.

THE author of the following sheets is sensible, that they will be thought to stand in need of some apology for several of their present circumstances, and is only sorry, that those, who will most readily and most loudly call for it, will scarce be satisfied with any he can offer. The subject of this essay, the method, and the time of its appearance will be equally censured in this polite and fashionable curious age. It will be urged with assurance by the modish Free-thinker, that enough has been already said on a subject quite exploded in all the companies he frequents, and the sober christian will modestly wish, that the public had been sooner presented with an remedy against the well-penned scurrilities of infidel writers, who have attempted to rob the Church of this important and distinguishing mark of truth. The

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former might be answered with ease, if he would but be disposed to receive an answer, and will meet in the body of this work with one, that may prove satisfactory, if solid arguments can be a match for shewy pretences of wit, and if impious raillery is not proof against the strongest motives offered by reason and religion. The latter (the sober christian) will easily excuse the delay, if he reflects that whatever insult has been offered to reason and common sense in this dispute no ways interests religion, which can never suffer by indecent or inconsistent writers on a subject which no Christian Church considers as an article of faith. And indeed whatever merit it may be thought in these our days to blacken the Church of Rome in the eyes of our unthinking countrymen, I cannot persuade myself, that the learned part of the Protestant Divines will acknowledge any obligation to authors, who, in this laudable view, have advanced facts unsupported by the least shadow of evidence and deduced consequences diametrically opposite to the surest test of truth. But these facts and these consequences, however groundless in themselves and however ill-calculated to promote a favorite party-scheme, have one recommendation to the public, which is always aimed at by all authors of modern systems and seldom neglected by their polite readers; I mean their novelty, or the
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appearance of it. Some centuries are now past since polite literature and natural philosophy were confined to a small number of learned. Physiology lay in a deplorable state, known best to the learned few, and most lamentably disguised by an unphilosophical majority, who pretended to an intimate acquaintance with nature, and under the specious names of ancient authors, without any just title to their protection and authority, obtruded their own cavils and strained comments upon the world to make those authors speak a language, to which they were utter strangers, and under this mask assumed a tyrannical power both over the minds of men and that *nature*, of which they knew so little.

But liberal arts in the mean time made their way to liberty step by step; they were seconded by the constancy and abilities of these noble adventurers; the clouds of darkness were dispelled; and argument and experience cast a glorious light on nature. Sophistry became useless and paralogisms that had appeared under the figure of reason and syllogism stood reveled in all the weakness and absurdity of the authors, who were not ashamed to deny *facts*, which were not consonant to their *systems*. Whilst the unphilosophical Goths and Wandals were driving off the stage, their adversaries, who from *effects* attempted a probable discovery of natural *causes* grew in

number, and, with the same constancy and process of experience, exerted their talents with that success which gave victory to reason and the field to the restorers of true philosophy after a long and tedious war. By these improvements literature broke out into a fairer day from an eclipse under which it had lain so long; and the human understanding was led to reflect on its natural œconomy; the power of reasoning and examining a subject matter properly; and not to determine rashly, but to weigh duely the intimations given by nature, to rise from the *effect* to the *cause*, never to go against the stream, nor force nature into a system concerted without her direction.

The corrupters of true philosophy well deserved the censure they met with; and the restorers of that science the greatest and just commendation. We still enjoy, we feel the good effects, which reason and a judicious process has caused; we should enjoy, we should feel still more, if all had continued their researches into nature, within the bounds prescribed by its author, among those objects, which, the wisest of mankind tells us, are abandoned to their disquisition. Had this glorious enterprize been pursued, their laudable endeavours would have been rewarded with such an increase of useful knowledge, as must have endeared them to their grateful
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and latest posterity. But the narrow compass of nature was not sufficient to satisfy the thirst of knowledge and that fund of presumption, which emboldens men to take cognizance, and pretend to judge, even of things above them.

The great advantages obtained over those, who had tied nature down to their systems, encouraged some who had a share in the revival of Letters, to enter upon more nice but fatal researches. Whether they thought their subject the (study of nature) exhausted, or whether flushed with success they conceived, that they had sufficiently provided the literary world with a safe method to proceed with judgment and to philosophize groundedly; or whether they despaired of finding their way through all the mazes of nature is an inquiry that needs not to be entered into. Be that as it will, it is too true, that several among those, who had done great services to literature, were resolved to take a more hazardous step, and to arraign not farther mistakes in the philosophy of their adversaries, but their religion.

To proceed regularly if one may say it, without an abuse of terms, a bill was found against them for imposture and forgery in religious affairs. It was in vain to except against the incompetency of the Court, the corruption and partiality of those, who took upon them-

selves to be judges without any commission, and the pack't Jury, by which this great cause was to be tried.

Before we enter on the articles of impeachment it may be proper to observe that they had not exhausted their subject with regard to literature and Physiology which appears evidently from the daily and important discoveries made since the resurrection of letters. It may even be presumed, and not without reason, that the exhausting of this subject is impossible, if we consider the properties of matter, the mechanism of nature in the vegetable and animal world, local motion, the extension of bodies, natural mysteries left in their primigenial obscurity, and tho' undoubtedly certain to all yet understood by none. A farther argument may be made to shew, that there was sufficient matter to employ their speculations, and that as yet they had not arrived at any certainty or evidence, from the several bands of philosophers, who disagree in very material points. *Modes* and fashions are introduced into the science of nature and have their periods. They disappear to make room for others; a *Descartes* is exploded, *Galileo* has not his former vogue, *Gassendi* is almost forgotten; and even a *Newton's* Empire is disputed in philosophy. No; the field of nature was wide and spacious; great geniusses would have had sufficient opportunities to make farther discoveries and
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open the way to posterity to a greater insight into, and a more perfect acquaintance with nature, had not the usurped liberty of *thinking* in religious as well as natural affairs determined them to attack that religion, to which they were bound to submit, and that authority, which it was a crime to contest.

The articles of impeachment were two; the religion they attacked was *old* and besides it was *troublesome*. The spirit of Libertinism was really the principal and that of novelty an auxiliary. Both produced in court a corrupt crowd of witnesses, and it was unanimously resolved, that a Reformation should be introduced adorned with all the graces of novelty and more favorable to flesh and blood. A sentence both injurious to God, and inconsistent with the real welfare of mankind, could not but meet with some oppositions in the execution. But the event only afforded a new proof of the weakness of duty and reason, when opposed by the wantonness of sensuality and the weight of human authority. A new-modelled way of thinking, the work of pride and immorality, took place of the old religion grounded on the immutable word of God. To get this scheme countenanced and established by law in some parts of *Europe* was a work of some difficulty, but this was removed by time and accident. However no time, no unforeseen events could satisfy the reasonable
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tions stated against it by people of all nations and all conditions. The undisputed tokens and proofs of the true Church of Christ still subsisted, and were too glaring, and too stubborn, to be either hidden or removed by bold asseverations, which were the only reasoning of our nice and elegant Reformers. A continuation of the miraculous powers was universally allowed to be part of the prerogative of the Catholick Church. These powers were in vain challenged by *Luther* and *Calvin*; when it could be no better, they were openly disavowed by their successors, but always were and still are claimed by the Church in communion with that of Rome. The natural consequence is, that this was the only true Catholic Church; but this consequence could not be admitted, and still could not be rejected without denying the principle, from which it so evidently flowed. This gave birth to the great dispute of which you are now presented with a candid and fair Review; a dispute revived some years ago by Dr. *Middleton*, who has treated this subject in a manner equally unjust to the Roman Catholick Church by scurrilous and groundless imputations of forgery and superstition, which he liberally bestows on it, and to the Reformation by the contempt he every where expresses for its ancient mother and the present clergy, and to Christianity in general by the
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deistical arguments, which he employs and the vile invectives he throws out against the first *Fathers*.

What answer has been made by these different classes of men the public needs no information. Protestants on one hand pleased to see a Gentleman of distinction in the world of letters enter the lists in favour of a principle, which has never been rightly established, and without which the Reformation can never be secured, but displeased on the other to find him advance nothing but scandal in support of the favorite doctrine, while the arguments he makes use of to fix the cessation of miracles at the death of the apostles equally prove, that no miracle ever was wrought, have endeavoured to rectify the essential defects in his system by new and various methods, which might have proved successful against their antagonist, if they did not contain a manifest contradiction to themselves. Such has been the issue of this affair, such as must always be the issue of every attempt of party-rage against settled principles and invariable truth. These Principles and this truth being on the Catholick side of the question it was not hard to place them in such a light as would render their cause clear to the eyes of every impartial reader. This has been so well pleaded by a divine of the Roman Catholick communion, that the well attested history he gives us of
miracles

miracles thro' every century, and the judicious remarks he makes on them have thrown no less lustre on his reputation, than character of indelible infamy on the propagators of falsehood and infidelity in this unhappy nation. Nothing would remain to be added to what this ingenious gentleman has lately published on this subject, were it only considered as a controversy between Catholics and Protestants. The intent of this Review has a greater latitude and the method of it is such as seems best suited to this intent, and takes in the cavils of the Deist as well as the sophisms of the Protestant. Miracles have been and must necessarily always be denied by Reformers to reach down to our days, but *Facts* are stubborn things and the principles, on which these facts are called in question, cannot hurt them, or the consequences we draw from them. Miracles in general are granted by all disciples of the old Religion, but some, I wish, I could not say, many of them except against particular miracles. They are not aware, that the former cannot subsist without the latter, and while they are fond of shewing an uncommon sagacity in canvassing each of *these*, a manifest inconsistency robs them of their title to *those*. They are too well acquainted with the characters of those holy personages, whom God has been pleased to honour with these extraordinary powers to suspect

suspect them of forgery or imposture; but enthusiasm, fervor austerly and a strong imagination are declared capable of working the greatest wonders; even the chymist and apothecary is played off in support of this fashionable, but stupid incredulity, to ascribe that power to nature, which it never received from God. I am ashamed to repeat such gross absurdities, as these wise ones daily retale to palliate their ignorance and to impose on the world with an affectation of superior sense and seeming importance.

That miracles have been published and been believed, which never existed, but in the heated brains of a few enthusiasts is on all hands allowed, but will it follow from hence, that it is unsafe to believe any miracles? Can that person be said to guard sufficiently against the danger of being deceived and led into errors concerning these prodigies, who lets himself be persuaded by a few bold *Railleries*, that life can be restored to the dead, sight to the blind and the gift of tongues communicated to the most illiterate by any one, but the great author of all things? Is it a greater weakness to believe a fact that is not well attested, than not to believe what has every kind of proof? Have we reason to doubt of facts which pass before our eyes, because we do not understand, how they are done? How can gentlemen, without forfeiting their title to Christianity,
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thus trifle away the great, the important proof of the Divine omnipotence, of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and of the truth of the Catholick Church for the diversion of a few libertins, who never fail to encourage this agreeable but profane topic of conversation? Wit and social mirth can never justify so unreasonable a sacrifice; and the hearers, however they may applaud their abhorrence of Priest-craft and bigotry, must depart with a very mean *Idea* of their sense and religion.



INTRODUCTION

TO THIS

R E V I E W.

I. **T**HE late famous Controversy betwixt the Divines of the Church of *England*, concerning Miracles, has been justly accounted of so great importance, as not to have escaped the notice of the curious and learned. To others less attentive, this previous information is requisite: that Dr. *Conyers Middleton* in 1747 published an *Introductory Discourse to a larger Work concerning the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church from the earliest ages, through several successive centuries: Tending to shew, that we have no sufficient reason to believe, upon the authority of the primitive Fathers, that any such powers were continued in the Church, after the days of the Apostles.* This larger work came forth in 1749, intituled, *A Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted, &c. by which it is shewn, that we have no sufficient reason to believe, upon the authority of the primitive Fathers, that any such powers were continued to the Church, after the days of the Apostles:*

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an argument, which he owns in the first page of the preface to his Free Inquiry, both strange and little understood; a subject of great importance, which had never before been professedly examined; the part, which he had undertaken to defend, not only new, but contrary to the general opinion, which prevails amongst Christians; an experiment big with consequences; in the management of which he had nothing to trust to, but his own PRIVATE judgment.

II. Both this Discourse and Free Inquiry, from their first appearance, have been earnestly maintained by some, and as earnestly opposed by others, and the greater number of our most eminent Divines. By the latter his system has been declared introductory of *Popery* or *Infidelity*, by its necessary consequences. By the Doctor and his associate Divines, their adversaries system, or systems, has been declared introductive of *Popery* by its necessary consequences: of *Popery*, as represented by them, equivalent to, if not worse, than *Infidelity*. This will appear hereafter. It seems then, that what we are to inquire into, is, how far they have been in the right, or wrong, in these their mutual Accusations; and whether in the mean they have not done themselves justice in them.

III. Thus much is certain, that had either system been grounded in any truth, it would have been introductive of no evil consequence

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at all: if either system could have given itself a foundation in divine truth, or a Scripture-foundation, they could not have so justly reproached each other with the want of it: had the christianity professed by each, been founded on the immoveable word of God, as by each pretended, it would not have stood in need of the necessary support of men's systems, which, as contradictory, neither can, and, as confessed, neither have, any foundation in that word; and therefore must unavoidably be productive of the worst of evil consequences. Thus then justly reproaching and reproached, Dr. Middleton begins: *Our first care should be to inform ourselves of the proper nature and condition of those miraculous powers, which are the subject of this dispute, as they are represented to us in the history of the gospel: for till we have learnt from those sacred records, what they really were, for what purposes granted, and in what manner exerted by the Apostles and first possessors of them, we cannot form a proper judgment of those evidences, which are brought either to confirm, or confute their continuance in the Church, and must dispute consequently at random, as chance, or prejudice may prompt us, about Things unknown to us [a]. And again, Amongst all those zealous champions, who have attempted to refute the Introductory Discourse, I have not observed one,*

[a] Preface to Free Inquiry, p. x, xi.

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one, continues the same Doctor, who seems to have spent a Thought in considering the origin and the use of those powers, as they are set forth in the New Testament [b]. In answer to which reproach, It must be confessed, says Mr. Brooke, that this is a method very proper to be made use of . . . it is indeed the most effectual way of settling, to the satisfaction of the rational inquirer, the grand point in debate. But this is a method, which the author of the Introductory Discourse, though he has prescribed it to others . . . yet has not thought proper himself to pursue [c]. To the same purpose replies Dr. Church: He (Dr. Middleton) taxes all his adversaries with neglecting this. But may not this charge be justly retorted upon himself? Has he ever given us a full and particular account of these things? I remember nothing like it [d]: Nothing like a scripture-foundation for any of their systems.

IV. Not to be wanting myself in so essential a point, I shall set off by proving in this place, that a scripture-foundation might have been given to a system of miracles. And whereas a mighty argument is raised against the continuation of miracles from the Fathers testimony of a cessation of them; such a foundation, and that of such a system, shall be pro-

[b] Preface to Free Inquiry, p. x, xi.

[c] Examination of the Free Inquiry, p. 329.

[d] Vindication of the miraculous Powers, p. 67, 68.

produced, as will be quite consistent with the continuation, and cessation attested by them: consistent with the œconomy of divine providence producing *marvellous* effects in all times, when *expedient*, and ceasing to produce them, when *inexpedient* [e]: consistent with every human and divine truth; the truth of human testimony of true miracles in what age soever; of the divine and prophetic testimony, that the Church of *Christ* should never be *prevailed* against by men or devils imposture: consistent even with a cessation of miracles about the time, which, as Dr. Middleton assures us, *the learned amongst the Protestants have generally supposed to have been the æra of the cessation of all miracles* [f], wilfully confounding an *universal* with a particular cessation: not one of which *learned Protestants* systems, can possibly be consistent with all or any of the above truths. Now if this foundation can be produced from divine authority, (the foundation consequently of a divine system) it will be evident, that from the ceasing of a particular kind, of a particular dispensation of miracles, *expedient* and *necessary*

[e] On the *expediency* and *inexpediency* of miracles, much is said by all these systems. See also a Sermon preached on this subject in his Majesty's chapel at *Whitshall*, May 7, 1749, and before the University of *Oxford*, by *William Parker*, M. A. Fellow of *Balial College* in *Oxford*, F. R. S. Publish'd by request.

[f] Introductory Discourse, p. xxxiv, v.

sary for the Church in her *infant* and *persecuted* state, a general conclusion for the cessation of all miracles can be no more deduced, than from the cessation of some particular miracles in the *Jewish* Church, after her establishment in the land of promise, a general conclusion can be deduced against the truth of that train of miracles attested after that, or any other period assignable by sects breaking off from her communion.

V. For the same reason, adds Dr. Middleton, that learned Protestants have assigned that memorable epoch of the conversion of the Roman empire for the cessation of miracles, *the Fathers also themselves, when they were disposed to speak the truth, have not scrupled to confess, that the miraculous gifts were then actually withdrawn, because the Church stood no longer in need of them* [g]. Mr. Brooke carries this argument, deduced from the shadow of contradiction, and concluding, that the Fathers contradict each other and themselves (which the Infidels have objected to the Evangelists) He carries, I say, this argument to a higher pitch, than the Doctor himself, whom he undertakes to confute. For though he can find no Fathers, from an *Origen* to a *Gregory the great*, testifying a general cessation, nay, who do not also testify the existence of true miracles in their times; though

[g] Introductory Discourse, p. x, xxiv, v.

though he quotes an *Augustin* explaining what he himself, what other Fathers manifestly must have meant by this cessation, yet by a surprizing dexterity, and with an *infirmatur auctoritate majorum* [b]: from the truth of their testimony he concludes the falshood of their testimony. What an illusion! to undertake a cause, which must be maintained by testimony, and have no other to depend on, but of such witnesses as, to qualify them for his purpose, he is necessitated to bring in guilty of the worst of fraud and imposture; whom there is no depending on, when they interpret their own words and meaning, and swear to the truth of what was the immediate object of their senses; but then, and then only must be credited, and in that, which would be a palpable lie and self-contradiction in them.

VI. St. *Augustin* long experienced in the wiles and artifices of the Church's enemies, how ready they were to catch at any thing in her Authors, that was not writ with the greatest precision of truth; towards the end of his life, undertook the revisal of his own works, and wrote his book of *Retractions*.

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[b] Defensio Miraculorum, quæ in Ecclesia Christiana facta esse perhibentur post tempora Apostolorum, quam in Scholis Theologicis Cantabrigiæ, Jun. 21. 1747. suscepit, cum pro gradu Baccalaureatus solemniter responderet, Z. BROOKE. A. M. Colleg. Div. Joan. Soc.

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It occurred to him what he, like the rest, had testified of this *cessation*, and, what, subsequently to it, and like the rest, he had offered by way of justifying the *propriety* of this cessation, with regard to what I had before said, says this Doctor, that THOSE miracles (observe the distinguishing relative) were not allowed to continue to our times, lest the soul should always seek after things visible, and mankind wax cold by their frequency, who had been inflamed by their novelty; is certainly true. For when hands are laid on the BAPTIZED (observe those Miracles, which were not allowed to continue) they do not so receive the Holy Ghost successively to our times, as to speak with the tongues of all Nations; nor successively to our times, are the sick healed by the shadow of Christ's preachers passing by and overshadowing them; and the same of other such, if other such like miracles there be, which it is MANIFEST did afterwards cease. But what I there said (here he enters his caveat against the error of these systems) is not so to be understood, as if I meant to persuade the world, that no miracles are now wrought in the name of Christ. No such thing. For I myself, at the time I wrote that very book, knew that a blind man had received sight at the shrine of the martyrs of Milan and in that city; and several other miracles I knew wrought in these very times; and farther that the multitude of such is so great that I neither
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can know them all, nor enumerate those I know [i].

VII. This passage of St. *Augustin* leads to, and comprehends in short, what I am going fully to prove from the *sacred Records*; particular miracles, or a particular dispensation of miracles, grounded on a scripture foundation: miracles *expedient and necessary* for a certain time; and after a certain time, after the Church's full establishment, ceasing, as no longer *expedient and necessary*. As for a scripture foundation for miracles to be wrought in the *name of Christ*, limitable, to no periods of time, this must be treated in another place. Now if this can be proved from divine authority, it will evince the perfect consistency of the Fathers attesting a cessation of miracles, and the existence of miracles

[i] Item quod dixi. Nec miracula ILLA in nostra tempora durare permilla sunt, ne anima semper visibilia quæreretur, & eorum consuetudine frigesceret genus humanum, quorum novitate flagravit: Non enim nunc usque, cum manus imponitur BAPTIZATIS, sic accipiunt spiritum sanctum, ut loquantur linguis omnium gentium, aut nunc usque, ad umbram transeuntium prædicatorum Christi, sanantur infirmi, & si qua talia facta sunt, quæ postea cessasse MANIFESTUM est. Sed non sic accipiendum est quod dixi, ut nunc in Christi nomine fieri miracula nulla credantur. Nam ego ipse, quando istum ipsum librum scripsi, ad Mediolanensium corpora Martyrum, in eadem civitate cæcum illuminatum fuisse jam noveram, & alia non nulla, qualia tam multa etiam istis temporibus fiunt, ut nec omnia cognoscere, nec ea quæ cognoscimus enumerare possimus. August. Retrac. L. 1 C. 13. §. 7.

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racles. It will evince that, although God permits a *lying spirit to go forth, and be in the mouths* [k] of lying prophets, the prophets of a *Samaria* or any sect church or synagogue; yet it is impossible for him to permit this inveterate *lying disposition*, this spirit, which was a *liar from the beginning and the father of lies*, [l] so to possess the mouths and hearts of all the successors of his Apostles, as to render the very contradictory to his own word true [m].

What then I undertake to prove in this place, with regard to a singular dispensation of miracles during the Church's infant and persecuted state (the cessation of which could have no connexion with an utter cessation of all miracles in general) consists principally in these three points briefly touched on by *St. Augustin*. 1. In the *extension and universality* of the divine effusion of miraculous powers in those times. 2. In the *sensible or visible* communication of them, and particularly at *baptism and confirmation*. 3. In the *tradition or transmission* of them by the Apostles to their disciples and successors, empowered alike to transmit them on successively to the period of this dispensation. At which period, miracles may surely be said to have ceased in the utmost rigour of the term, such then ceasing as the world never had seen before,

[k] 1 Kings xxi. 22.

[l] John viii. 44.

[m] Matt. xvi. 18.

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fore, nor hath since. These points, of such importance in this *grand debate*, rest on the most obvious scriptures, how little soever attended to, and from what soever motive, by either of these systems.

VIII. The *extension and universality* of this effusion. It was foretold by prophecy. *Thus said the Lord—I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring [n]. I will pour out my spirit upon ALL flesh, and your SONS and your DAUGHTERS shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your YOUNG men shall see visions. And also upon the SERVANTS and upon the HANDMAIDS in those days I will pour out my spirit [o].* A time, when the power of the charismatic gifts was to be more illustrious, more diversified, more general, than ever before, or after among God's children. When there would be no farther need of every man's teaching his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, *know the Lord: For they shall ALL know me, from the LEAST of them to the GREATEST of them*; because his divine spirit would become himself their internal law-giver, *would write his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts [p].* The coming of which divine spirit was also prophesied and
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[n] Isai xliv. 3.

[o] Joel ii. 28, 29.

[p] Jerem. xxxi. 33, 34.

promised by *Christ* himself before his passion; and accomplished on the day of Pentecost [q]. From the fecundity of which *creating* spirit the Church was to receive her birth; from whose omnipotency, her miracles; from whose *abode*, with, and *guidance of her into all truth*, she was to receive her unerring authority; from whose supporting strength, her indefectible duration to the worlds end.

IX. But observe; the descent of this spirit on the infant Church, was accompanied with audible and visible signs [r], *a sound from heaven as of a rushing wind, cloven tongues as of fire*. Observe also besides these sensible tokens of the divine approach, the extensiveness and generality of this effusion. *It filled all the house, it sat on each of them, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. God had assembled witnesses, from all parts of the habitable globe, of the greatest miracle ever seen by man; *Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians*; all in amaze exclaiming, *we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*. Accordingly, at the preaching of Peter, *three thousand souls* were

[q] Joh. xiv. 16, 17. xv. 26, 27. xvi. 13.

[r] Acts ii.

were added unto the Church the same day, were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise, said St. Peter, is unto YOU, and to your CHILDREN, and to ALL that are afar off, even as MANY as the Lord our God shall call. For no less a miracle was requisite to introduce Christianity into an infidel world, and give it the rapidity of its progress.

The miracles promised by *Christ* and specified by him [s], were to follow all those in general, who believed and were baptized, not one excepted, and did follow each of them. And what is still more singular, the miraculous powers granted to the Apostles, were not only communicated by them to the disciples, but by these transmitted to the children begotten by them in *Jesus Christ* successively, untill the work of God was perfectly accomplished: for the world's conversion, not being a work to be done at once, but progressively, the divine wisdom provided by this succession of miracles, that the later should be an additional proof to posterity of the truth of the former wrought by *Christ* and his Apostles, and of the truth of his *prophecy* and *promises* concerning them. Of this we have abundant proofs from the sacred records, as far as they extend; and for ages after, from the testimony of the successors of the Apostles. The first

[s] John xiv. 11, 12. Mark xvi. 17.

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first are unexceptionable to a *Middleton*, who professes to believe the *gospel* and the *gospel-miracles*; and the second, to his adversaries, who abound in those proofs against him.

XI. We have abundant proof hereof from *St. Paul's* epistles. *There are*, says he [t], writing to the first Christians, *diversities of gifts, but the same spirit . . . the manifestation of spirit is given to EVERY man to profit withal, dividing to EVERY man severally as he will . . . to the edifying of the Church. For to one is given by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit. To another faith by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit. To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kind of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues . . . God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. . . . When YE come together, EVERY one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying. To this end, and with regard to the prophetic gift, he orders that in their assemblies the prophets should speak two or three: if any other sitting by have a revelation, let the first hold his peace.*

[t] 1 Cor. xii, xiv.

peace. . . If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the things that I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord [u]. For you are not the *first*, nor the *only*, concludes the Apostle, who have received the gospel of *Christ*. What I teach you; *I teach in all the Churches of the saints.*

XII. This general communication of the miraculous gifts, this divine demonstration of the truth of Christianity, was so notorious that the Apostle supposes it as a point incontestable, which would have been the excess of extravagance had it not been self-evident: notorious to the Church of *Corinth*, one of the greatest, of the most improved in arts and sciences, of *Greece*, of the whole world; and to all other cities and provinces whither soever the sound of the Apostle's preaching had extended. So notorious, that it was expedient divine ordinances should obviate the confusion, which by abuse, too common with respect to God's greatest benefits to man, began to ensue from it; some seeming to covet and prefer the more showy, as the *gift of tongues*, to the more edifying and profitable, the gift of *prophecy* [x]. So notorious, that the Apostle is apprehensive, lest the daily and constant occurrence of them should render them less valued,

[u] 1 Cor. xii. xvi. 33, 36.
xv. i 33, 36.

[x] 1 Cor. xii.

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lued, and so put an obstacle by their ingratitude to the overflowing of the divine spirit. He therefore charges the Church of *Thessalonica*, to be careful, not to *quench or extinguish the spirit, not to despise prophecys* [y]. He reminds them of the stupendous miracles wrought no less amongst them, than the other Churches by God's spirit: *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power*: it has been confirmed to you by miracles, by the gifts, which the Holy Ghost has shed amongst you, by the entire certainty which the evidence of them has given you; *in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance* [z]. So notorious, that it was the foundation on which the Apostle grounds his severe reproach to the Church of the *Galatians*. They had been converted by him, but, during his absence, certain judaizing false apostles had endeavoured to corrupt their faith by persuading the necessity of the legal ceremonies. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth; you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, by the gospel, crucified among you; in whom the mystery of the cross has been renewed, by baptism? This only would I learn of you: received you the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ... He, therefore, who giveth to you the spirit, and*
worketh

[y] 1 Theſſal. v. 19, 20.

[z] Ibid. i. 5.

worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the bearing of the faith [a]? Miracles therefore, and the like miracles, were wrought among the Galatians, as among the Corinthians and the other Churches of the saints, or the Apostle's reproach had been weak and groundless.

XIII. The same Apostle finding certain disciples at Ephesus, said unto them, *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied [b].*

XIV. I shall conclude this scripture-evidence of the indiscriminate or universal communication of the charismatic gifts to all the faithful baptized and confirmed, by another fact of no less importance. Philip, one of the seven deacons, had planted the gospel in
Sama-

[a] Gal. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

[b] Acts xix.

Samaria, by working great miracles among them. One of those who believed and were baptized, *was a certain man called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria . . . to whom they all gave heed to from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.* Nevertheless, this man, so idolized, himself believed also: and when he was baptized, continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Peter and John came to *Samaria* to confirm the faithful, who had only been baptized by Philip, that they might receive the Holy Ghost and his miraculous gifts. They laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the Apostles hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost [c]. As much astonished as he was before at the signs and miracles wrought by Philip, he was much more so when he saw, that the Apostles had power of communicating these gifts by the imposition of their hands only. He proposes therefore to purchase the miraculous power, incomparably more miraculous, than all the other signs and wonders, the power of transmitting to others the gift of miracles.

XV. How

[c] Acts viii.

XV. How long this singularly miraculous dispensation continued in the Church of Christ, from which, for its excellence, the ages it continued in were called *miraculous*, and at the cessation of which, in the natural language of the Christian Fathers, miracles were said to have ceased, God ceasing then to pour forth, by the same channel of the imposition of hands, that universal inundation of them; might indeed have been the subject of a FREE INQUIRY amongst Christian Divines. But instead of that, in the present inquiry and all the answers to it, we find two questions, as different and distinct as any two can be, confounded together designedly, (for I cannot accuse such numbers of truly learned men with ignorance) for reasons well known to themselves, and which we may see hereafter. We find the question, when these *singular* miracles ceased, confounded with this other, when *all* miracles ceased. A question unheard of in the Church of *Christ*, whatever might have happened out of it. A question supposing the point in question, the Church having always believed, that miracles in general never had, or would cease utterly. A fact, which they all suppose has happened, and only dispute, when it happened.

XVI. In their disputes among themselves, they may indeed argue against each other, upon what imaginary hypothesis they please.

But as they all unite to attack the miracles of the Church subsequent to their several arbitrary periods, it has a very unpromising aspect to any serious inquirer after truth, to see them all set off against her, by a real, or wilful mistake in the very state of the question. For it can be no question betwixt them and the Church, whether this extraordinary dispensation with its consequences, were to be perpetual, or occasional and temporal only, whether Christian authors, or Fathers, a *Chrysostome* [d], an *Augustin* [e], a *Gregory* [f], in the middle of the fourth, in the fifth, in the sixth century, have not testified the cessation of it. Neither need it be a question betwixt the Doctor's adversaries and the Church, whether this universal effusion, owned by the Church's adversaries [g], so evident in the gospel, did not continue in the Church for three whole cen-

[d] Chrys. in 1 Cor. *Λογος* 5. *Ethic. Λογος* καθ'. Idem. 1 Tim. *Λογ.* 1. in Coloss, *Λογ.* 2.

[e] Aug. de ver. rel. c. 25. De util. cred. c. 16. De unit. eccles. c. 16.

[f] Greg. Hom. xix. in evang. post in.

[g] So copious and general were the effusions of the Holy Ghost in those days, that men of almost of every age and of almost every condition of life felt, in a greater or less degree, its divine influence. It was then no unusual thing for women, and the meanest of the people, to partake of supernatural powers and communications. The very do-

turies or more; for this has been proved abundantly by her learned authors, and by such chain of primitive tradition, as is employed against the Doctor, by his learned adversaries. I refer but to a small part of what might be produced [b]. Much less

dies, the vestments, and even shadows of the Apostles, were the occasion of a multitude of miracles. All this we are led to believe, by the unquestionable authority of the sacred writings. Mr. BROOKE's Examination of the Free Inquiry, p. 6.

Dr. Middleton, grounding himself on this fact, that this universality was maintained by all his adversaries during certain ages, as he must have maintained it during the lives of the Apostles, therefrom desumes his argument for impugning the truth of primitive miracles. *Such and such miracles* (he introduces the Fathers thus speaking) *are done amongst us . . . by ignorant laymen, women, boys, and any simple Christian whatever.* He cites Origen, to prove that the casting out devils was generally performed by laymen. *ὡς ἰνῶναι γὰρ ἰδιώται τὸ τοῦτο ἐπετέλειον.* Cont. Cels. 7. 334. Free Inquiry, p. 22.

[b] From Clem. Rom. epist. ad Corin. n. 42.

Euseb. hist. eccles. l. vi. 29. Idem l. iii. 39.

Cyp. epist. 55. Id. epist. 59, 69.

Apollon. apud Euseb. hist. eccles. l. v. 18.

Aristo. Pellæus.

Epiph. de pond. & mens. n. 15.

Ignat. epist. ad Rom.

From Justin Martyr, attesting that miracles were as common in his time as in the Apostles.

From Iren. l. ii. c. 31, 33. Idem l. v. ver. 6. Idem l. iii. 24.

From Tertul. ad Scap. c. 4. Idem apol. capp. 23, 26, 37, 43, 46. Idem de spect. c. 26. Idem de cor. mil. c. 11. De anima c. 57.

less can it be a question, whether there were not always a number of forged miracles, and false pretences to true, by wicked and designing men, since nothing but the truth of the Church's miracles could have induced a *Simon* to offer at the sacrilegious purchase, nor his disciples, nor all heretics, the false *Christs*, the false *prophets* and *apostles*, to counterfeit the same; not in the first ages only, in the reign of *Trajan*, *Adrian* and *Antonin*, but in succeeding ages also [i]. Nor is this a question

con-

From Theophilus l. ii. ad Autolyc. p. 77.

From Minutus Felix. dialog.

From Origen cont. Celsum l. i. p. 7. Idem p. 20. l. vii. p. 334, 376. Idem l. i. p. 34, 35. l. iii. 127. l. ii. 52, 124.

From Cyprian. epist. 2. ad Donat. Id. epist. ad Demetrian. Id. de idol. vanit. Id. de lapsis.

From Arnob. l. i. adv. Gent. p. 14.

From Lactantius div. inst. t. l. ii. c. 15.

From Jul. Firmii Matern. de error. prof. relig. p. 29.

From Athanasius de incarnat. verbi Dei, &c.

[i] Igitur mystici eorum sacerdotes libidinosè quidem vivunt, magias autem perficiunt, quemadmodum potest unusquisque ipsorum. Eorcismis & incantationibus utuntur. Amatoria quoque & agogina, & qui dicuntur Paredri & Oniropompi, & quæcunque sunt alia parerga apud eos exercentur. Iren. l. i. c. 23. ed. P. BB. Menander ad summum magiæ pervenit. ibid. Magiam (exercent) incantationes, invocationesque, & reliqua universa parerga. l. i. c. 24. Artes enim magicas operabuntur & ipsi (Carpocratiani) & incantationes, philtra quoque & charitesia, & paredros, & oniropompos, & reliquas malignationes, dicentes se potestatem habere ad dominandum jam principibus & fabricatoribus mundi hujns. l. i. 25.

That

concerning the miracles of a false, or *anti-christian* church, but of the *true* Church of *Christ*. For neither a *Middleton* has pretended, that the Church expired with the last of the Apostles, nor have his adversaries pretended, that she expired with an *Origen*, a *Cyprian*, a *Chrysostome*, or at that memorable epoch of *Constantine's* conversion, and that of the *Roman* empire. It concerns the miracles of that Church, which was the object of the divine *prophecies* and *promises*; which was to derive her permanent *stability*, *sanctity*, *truth*, from God's *omnipotency*, *holiness*, and *veracity*; which, even in the supposition, that she was to be deprived of every sensible token of a supernatural intervention in her behalf; or was not to be deprived of it, must nevertheless require, in every part of her duration (to verify the *promises*) an abundant supply of *supernatural* grace perpetually diffusing itself by thousands of different channels over the whole body; which is a blessing of a superior order and beyond a miracle.

XVIII. What is then the real state of the question between these systems and the Catholic Church? It is, whether the divine prophecies

That the Cataphryges, *Montanus's* disciples, in the second century, challenged a transmission of miraculous powers, see Euseb. hist. eccles. lib. v. 16.

phesies and promises of miracles annexed to the *faith* of those that believed, and to *prayer* accompanied with *faith*, miracles as *great* and *greater* than *Christ* himself performed, promises unlimited by God, can be so limited by man, as to have been no farther verified by one single miracle, than to the end of the Apostles lives, or to the end of two or three centuries after. The first is the system of Dr. *Middleton*, the second, that of his adversaries. Hence arises another question, which is properly the subject of these sheets: Whether the principles by which the Doctor impugns the truth of all miracles since his period, and his adversaries impugn the truth of all, from the fixed date of theirs, be consistent or inconsistent with the truth of Christianity established and propagated by miracles, which have been impugned by every system of Infidelity. A short and general view of the principles of the contending parties may not be improper in this place, by way of introduction to our present subject.

XVIII. Innumerable instances of a miraculous providence over the *sons* of God, the people of God, the *church* of God, have the same foundation of truth, as the authenticity of sacred records. Upon what principles must infidel systems attack these miracles dispersed through such a series of ages as reaches from the *fall* of
of

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of man to man's redemption? Human ignorance must intrude itself into the cabinet-council of God's wisdom, and inform the deity, that having created the world in a wonderful manner, (*k*) and placed it continually before our eyes, a grand object of our daily contemplation; all miracles are *unexpedient* and *unnecessary*: Such must be any other revelation that he shall think to make of himself, after this great revelation; especially having already given to man the light of reason, a faculty of discerning the *fitness* or *unfitness* of things. If, contrary to these reasons and advice, he thinks of enacting, revealing, any other *law* or *laws*, which shall be construed to be contrary to, or not evidently deducible from, the light of *such reason*, and agreeable to *such fitness*, on which this counsellor and other such learned counsel ground their law *immutable*, to be interpreted by no other than themselves; let him accompany the enacting and promulgating his laws with what miracles he pleases; let him continue a series of them through ever so many generations, and under the sanction of whatever testimony; be it at the peril of having both his *laws* and *miracles*, with all their testimony, judged, and accord-

(*k*) Tho' the world is created *in a wonderful manner*, the *creation* is not properly a miracle. God, as creator, is the author of *nature*, which can have no other cause; and created *nature*, the term of this divine operation, bears to it's author the relation of a natural *effect* to a free and almighty *cause*.

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cordingly treated, as the rank production of *forgery* and *imposture*, by mankind confederated to propagate a mad delusion through all ages.

XIX. All heterodox or sect-systems dissenting from, and impugning the doctrines and miracles of God's Church under the law of nature, or of the written law, must inevitably have proceeded on the same principles with this system of infidelity. We shall see the incompatibility of the truth of the Church's doctrines and miracles with the truth of any opposite sect whatever. God must therefore work no miracles beyond the limits they assign him. What is *expedient* and *necessary* for such sect, must be a divine, an eternal *expediency* and *necessity*. God indeed *does great and marvellous things, wonders without number* (l). He commands their memory to be conveyed to the latest posterity; and what but testimony can convey them? He appeals himself even to heathen testimony. *Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of the earth unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it* (m). Yet all this testimony must wither away, must vanish at the beck of systems, their

(l) Job. v, ix.

(m) Deut. iv, 32.

their *necessities* requiring it. All the vouchers must be a conspiracy of *fools* and *knaves*. A *non plus ultra* is fixed by them to human voracity and to God's omnipotency, though no limits can be fixed to their folly and presumption.

XX. For no sooner is the redemption of man accomplished; nay, whilst it is accomplishing, the same systems, by the same principles, oppose themselves against the doctrines and miracles of the Church of *Christ*. God had punished the proud sons of the earth attempting to secure themselves a retreat from a second deluge and the wrath of Heaven, by building the tower of *Babel*, and by a miraculous multiplication and division of tongues. But mindful of his promise to *Abraham*, that in *his seed all nations should be blessed*, had prepared a remedy by the gift of tongues bestowed on the Apostles and their disciples, that all distinction might cease betwixt *Greek and Jew*, betwixt *Barbarian and Scythian*, betwixt *bond and free*, and *Christ be all and in all* [n] for evermore. That this great work might be perfectly accomplished, this miraculous and general effusion of God's spirit so singular to and distinguishing of the Church in her infant and adolescent state, from the Church under any other dispensation; this miracle, I say,

say, with the other charismatic gifts was to be transmitted down successively and continue during certain ages. That ceasing, God still continues working miracles in the *Christian Church*, by chosen persons, and at different times, through a series of seventeen centuries, and the unanimous consent of all Church history attests it. What do infidel, what do sect systems oppose against it!

XXI. Theistical infidelity, grounding itself on the presumption, that no miracle can be *expedient and credible* since that of the creation, and *materialist* infidelity denying the possibility of a miracle, must oppose it on one or other of these suppositions. Either that the Apostles and their disciples were grossly deluded themselves, believing they saw, and did wonders which they neither saw nor did: Or that by an execrable artifice they had deluded others in all these points: or that they had inveigled and prevailed on others as wicked as themselves, to attest the truth of fantastic wonders invented on this motive only, of doing honour to the memory of *Jesus Christ*. For on what other suppositions can it be opposed? Suppositions which must extend, not to *Peter* only, who, replenished with these divine gifts, converts so many thousands all in amaze at so stupendous a miracle; not to the Apostles only and their disciples; to a *Paul* appealing to the Churches, which he had founded in
Greece,

Greece, or wherever else, for the truth and sensible experience of these gifts; but to all the faithful converted by their preaching and miracles, *Parthians and Medes, Jews and Gentiles*, in *Asia* and in *Europe*; converted by the miracles of those, who believing received the communication of these gifts in what ever parts of the universe. These suppositions can have no other truth, than as grounded on the real and total disorder and subversion of all the rational or moral faculties, or both of all Christians then living, and without evidence of the fact, cannot in reason or in justice be applied to any individual person: Much less to the whole Church of Christ successively through any space of time. This would be not only subversive of the truth of all testimony, of the foundations of Christianity, but of the common reason and sense of mankind recoiling at the palpable absurdity of such hypotheses.

XXII. What did sects in the Apostles days, or what could their systems oppose against it? The *anticrists* concerning whom St. *John* testifies, *that there were many* in his time, *who went out from the Church that they might be made manifest* [o]; *Simon* the magician with his various progeny, must have opposed the truth of the Apostles doctrines and

[o] John ii. 18, 19.

and miracles on one or other of these infidel suppositions, and Dr. *Middleton* consistently with his professed belief of the gospel miracles and doctrines, with all his adversaries, must have opposed himself against the gross absurdity of any of them. This lets us in directly and precisely to the subject of this inquiry; whether this same Doctor, by impugning all miracles whatever after the death of the Apostles; whether his adversaries, impugning all alike after their different periods, have proceeded on principles different from those, by which the *Apostolic* Church's doctrines and miracles were attacked by the then infidel sectarian systems.

XXIII. Christianity, such as *once delivered to*, and professed by the Church of Christ, requires so great a sacrifice of the whole man, so intire a sacrifice of every *human understanding, exalting itself* [p] and pretending to comprehend, or else to reject, what is incomprehensible; so *holy a living sacrifice* of the whole body [q], and every inordinate lust; that it could not have been introduced without miracles, and the greatest miracles, into an incredulous and wicked world. In what measure, in what manner, and how long, God was to interpose miraculously by external signs,
in

[p] 2 Cor. x. 15 [q] Rom. xii. 1.

in giving birth, establishment, permanent stability, to his Church; divine wisdom only could direct, and human ignorance and rashness only could prescribe. What was once an illustrious proof, a divine attestation of the Church's truth, would be always so, if continued through every age of her duration. Anti-christian, anti-catholic ancient systems have endeavoured, ever since her birth to deprive and to rob her of this divine testimony. They could not even attempt it, but by calling God's wisdom to account, and by prescribing to him in the exercise of his power; by impeaching the Church of *Christ*, and bringing in all christendom accomplices in a detestable conspiracy of deluding the whole earth; a successive conspiracy renewed and executed from age to age; supported in regions and kingdoms so remote from mutual commerce; betwixt men, that neither knew, or could ever know each other: This attempt so big with monstrous absurdities, and destitute of all other grounds to support itself; instead of prejudicing the Church's cause, must have become evidence in her behalf at any unbiassed tribunal. Even these her enemies must have owned, (and the power of truth must have extorted this confession from them.) that their contests against her could have no other
final

final issue, but in their embracing *ca-*
tholic verity, or by turning downright *in-*
fidels.

XXIV. How great then must be the united strength of the truth of the Church, of all her motives of credibility, may be seen from hence, that this single proof, her miracles, has put her enemies, infidel and christian; to such desperate shifts, as force them to recur to principles, not only inconsistent with the truth of christianity, but, as will be shewn, with the common sense and experience of all mankind. How far modern systems have been reduced to these same shifts, they have published themselves. My task then is reduced into this compass, of shewing it from their own confession. In regard to which difficulty, I shall not complain so much, as Dr. Church has done, with regard to another; that *he had neither books nor leisure*; for though I have no library, nor an easy access to any, yet I want few more books than what they have furnished me with; and it is plain, I have not been in haste to answer them. *That to separate ALL the true miracles that were wrought after the third century from more fictions, was a work far beyond his poor abilities.* For I do not pretend to separate ALL that is false in these systems, from what is true, nor the tenth part of it: *That it must be left to persons of far more extensive learning, and of*
the

the exactest judgment [r]. For I really think, that common sense, sufficient to distinguish plain truth from evident falshood and contradiction; a mediocrity of learning, little more than the Apostle requires in order *to be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you* [s]; may suffice, in the main, for my purpose. To the query, if such should be made, why so much *leisure* taken in the review of a controversy of so long standing, and why it appears so late? the answer is, that had any other undertaken to confute the vain boast, both seen and heard by me with indignation, that a *Middleton*, and such as he, *had given the Church enough of her miracles*; these remarks, which in great measure were made towards the beginning of this controversy, would never have appeared. A farther reason, and not the only one, of their appearing so late, is, that I was willing to wait and see, what this question, which hath already produced such contests and contradiction amongst these Divines, might still
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[r] Vindication of the miraculous powers, p. 3, 4.

[s] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

produce amongst them. But waiting for this, I might wait too long, even to the world's end; as this question beginning with sects, can only end with them.





A
R E V I E W
Of the important
C O N T R O V E R S Y
C O N C E R N I N G
M I R A C L E S, &c.

C H A P T E R I.

I.  I N all controversies betwixt men of sense and learning, certain principles should be previously agreed to by mutual consent, or they are necessarily endless, and in vain.

As this is requisite in all disputes, it is particularly so, where the interest of religion, the greatest imaginable, is concerned; more still, where it is allowed, by both sides, that the foundation, and the very being of religion, depends upon the point in controversy.

II. In a question, therefore, of so great importance, that is to decide on the truth of that *particular* christianity, which these systems are contrived to support, and which can be supported, as they maintain, by the truth only of one of them; where the systems decide on the truth of *universal* christianity up to the third century, or to the decease of the Apostles; and where facts are examined, on the truth or falsehood of which, the truth or falsehood of these systems must depend; they should have begun, *first*, by shewing and fixing the limits and extent of human testimony, by which facts must be conveyed, and on which the truth sought after, chiefly rests. *Secondly*, As these facts must be either the effects of *divine*, of *demoniacal* power, or of human *forgery*, they should have begun by setting certain marks, by which these different effects might be distinguished, obvious to mankind in general; as what concerns religion, is the concern of all mankind. For certainly human (*a*) forgery, although these systems seem to have forgotten or concealed it, is no less a fact, than a divine miracle or a *devilish* wonder; open to

[a] Not long before *Luther's* time some ecclesiastics of no mean condition, were convicted of such forgery, and condemned at *Berne* in *Switzerland*, and burnt alive. See *Nacler*. p. 311. printed at *Tubinge* an. 1516. *Du Preau* f. 329. p. 2. *Surius* in his brief commentary, f. 61. printed at *Cologne* 1574. *St. Jerome* relates from *Tertullian*, that a certain priest of *Asia* was convicted before *St. John the Apostle* of having forged a narration of the travels of *St. Paul* and *Thecla*, and of the baptism of a lion, and having confessed the fact, was degraded in punishment of it. *Jerom. cat. scriptorum eccles.*

to proof, and capable of being conveyed by testimony, no less than other facts.

III. Previous to, and independently of, all this, it is sufficient here to premise, that for as much as all, or the chief, engaged in this controversy concerning the duration of Christian miracles, for or against Dr. *Middleton*, are Christian Divines, and make open profession of the belief of Christianity; they must not, cannot consistently with this belief and profession, ground the credibility of facts, and of human testimony, on proofs, which, in the hands of an *Infidel*, Jewish sectarist, or *Jew*, might defeat the credibility of the miracles in the *Old* or *New* Testament: because, as no proof can lie against any truth, particularly, truths revealed from God, bearing in a particular manner the impression of the divinity; so is it certain, that a rule, which will serve either way to prove the truth or falsehood, can be no rule of truth.

IV. However inconsistent with himself Dr. *Middleton* may have been, as a *Christian*, a *personated* Christian, or an *Infidel*; he has certainly owned and professed the belief of the gospel and of the gospel-miracles; and the truth of the gospel refers to, and supposes the truth of the *Jewish* law [b]. *They are so great*, he confesses, *so important, so universally beneficial, as to be highly worthy the interposition of the Deity*. To shew the inconsistency of his system with Christianity, is enough for my purpose; for one inconsistency suffices to destroy any one system.

V. Among

[b] See the Doctor portrayed under these different characters by a masterly hand, the author of the two epistles to the Rev. Mr. *Brooke*, ep. 2. p. 15.

V. Among many false principles, the Doctor lays down this true one [c]: *That it is rash and presumptuous to decide upon the views and motives of the Deity by the narrow conceptions of human reason.* It may be added, that it is the height of impious pride and folly; thus far true. Farther, he proceeds, *that the whole, which the wit of man can possibly discover of the ways or will of the Creator, must be acquired, not by imagining vainly within ourselves what may be proper or improper for him to do, but by looking abroad, and contemplating what he has actually done.* All this is allowed him, readily allowed by his adversary Dr. Dodwell [d],

VI. Whence it is inferred, with the consent of both these systems, that all the miracles, which God *has done actually*, and are recorded in the Old and New Testament, come within the reach of human testimony. Nay, God commands them to be delivered and conveyed to posterity, by human testimony: *Talk you of all his wondrous works. Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children* [e].

VII. Although these facts are believed by Christians, on divine authority, for as much as they believe the divine inspiration of both Testaments, yet these facts, which, previous to that faith, were only received on human testimony, were rational motives of conversion to unprofessed Heathens, and to Jewish *sceptics*, or *sectarists*. The same holds good in gospel-miracles: *Heathens, Jews, Christian sectarists*, had rational motives from human testimony, for believing the truth of the gospel-miracles, antecedently to their con-

[c] Free Enquiry, Pref. xxii.

[d] Free Answer, p. 12, 13.

[e] 1 Chron. xvi. 9. Deut. vi. 7.

conversion. Otherwise, none but those, who had seen miracles, could have been rationally converted. The contrary to which is owned by these systems: *Miracles*, says Dr. Church [f], *may be pronounced to be the shortest and clearest means of conviction of the divine authority of any mission, and consequently of any doctrine, to those who see them. And farther, as we may have sufficient certainty of their having been worked in times past, they must, if well attested, be full proofs even to us who do not see them.*

VIII. Hence follows, what both these systems must confess, if self-consistent, that whatever might have been alledged against these miraculous facts, and the testimony recommending them, from Heathen, Jewish, or Sectarian prejudice, bigotry, interest, animosity and hatred; was no rational, nor just plea, to invalidate either. In spite of all pretence of whatever *internal* incredibility of the facts or witnesses, *pretended superstition* of the Jewish or Christian rites, *pretended errors and absurdity* of their doctrines, the *futility* and *inexpediency* of the facts themselves to prove, what was deemed by their *common sense* absolutely *impossible*; the fall of man by eating an apple; sin conveyed to all his posterity; the *folly* of the cross; the resurrection of the flesh, &c. in spite of all this, I say, the testimony stood its ground, quite overballancing and precluding all exceptions formed by heathen or heterodox systems; from obstinacy in error, or necessity of self-defence.

IX. Farther, it follows, that the credibility of them from human testimony must be allowed by both

[f] Dr. Church's Vindication, p. 63.

both these systems, notwithstanding all their objections against it, on these following heads, and in this form: *First*, Some kind of miracles ceased; they ceased to be so frequent; therefore they were utterly ceased. *Secondly*, They ceased after the Death of *Moses*; after the Death of *Joshua*; after two or three centuries of that Church's primitive purity; but precisely when, it is *not necessary* to fix, because *impossible* to fix. But, they all certainly ceased after that Church's flourishing *establishment* in the land of promise. But, much more certainly, they all ceased, when an impure sect arose, which caused the purity of that Church and her miracles to cease, as that of *Jeroboam*, of *Samaria*, or any other.

X. Both these systems must allow, according to their several limits, that no rational exception could have been made against the credibility of such miracles, from the instrumentency, or means, by which these miracles were wrought. For it is publicly maintained by them as a certain truth, as it surely is [g], *that whatever instruments God makes use of to work any effect, such instruments are to be judged the most apt, the most expedient, and even the most necessary for such an end.*

XI. The several instruments, which we find God made use of in working miracles, were reliques, the bones of a dead saint and prophet[b], the

[g] *Quibus Deus cunque utatur instrumentis in re aliquâ perficiendâ, ea existimanda sunt ad rem istam aptaisse maximè atque accommoda, adeoque pernecessaria.*
Z. BROOKE *defensio miraculorum*, &c. p. 10.

[b] 2 Kings xiii. 21. Matt. ix. 20. Acts xix. 12. Ibid. v. 15. Numb. xxi. 8. 9.

the *hem* of a garment, pieces of cloth, which had touched the bodies of saints; a *shadow*; a *brazen image*, though it was foreseen, what abuse would afterwards be made of it by a people prone to idolatry [*i*]: *Holy water, oil, spittle and clay*; the *pool of Bethesda*. No exception against all this is offered even from the Middletonian system, in whatever century of the Jewish Church, from the first to the last, down to the end of the lives of the apostles. Yet, what miracles, how well forever attested to have been wrought by such like instruments, beyond the periods of the respective systems, are not impugned as superstitious, and deemed incredible by any other argument, than turning into ridicule these very means which God made use of to effect them?

XII. No rational exception, I say, can be made from these systems, in respect of the persons, or singularities of such, concerned in working those miracles; on account of their strange, and apparently *odd austerities* and works of penance [*k*]; their abode in *deserts*; their *fasts* even of forty days and nights from all kind of nourishment; of a *Moses, Elias, the Messiah*; religious *abstinence* from certain meats and drink [*l*]; their *vows* [*m*]; the sin of breaking them, even that of *chastity*; their *penitential garb* [*n*]; all which, and much more of the same nature; what-

[*i*] Numb. v. 17, 22. & seq. James v. 14. John ix. 6. v. 2.

[*k*] Ezekiel iv. Isai xx. 3. Jer. xxvii. 2. Hosea i. 2. & seq.

[*l*] Numb. vi. 2. & seq. Mat. iii. 3, 21.

[*m*] Deuter. xxiii. Levit. xxvii. 1 Tim. v. 12.

[*n*] Mat. iii. 4.

whatever construction was put on them by *the men of sense* [o], in Dr. Middleton's language; the *sectarists*, the *infidels* of those days, of *fanaticism*, *enthusiasm*, *superstition*, *madness*, *diabolism*, (for neither the [p] prophets, nor the inspirer of the prophets escaped these imputations) yet all our systems must form a quite contrary judgment of them consistently with the professed belief of all these systemists; who must own the very reverse of the sentiments of those sectarists and infidels, was truth and divine truth. So far from these *austerities*, *desarts*, *fasts*, *vows*, *continency*, *virginity* [q], *following the lamb whithersoever he goeth*; *leaving all to follow Christ*, rendring these miracles incredible, there are few credible without them.

XIII. Both these systems must allow, that these words, *respect*, *veneration*, *honour*, *worship*, even *adoration*, whatever they may be in modern languages, are all equivocal in the learned; Latin, Greek and Hebrew [r]. They must also allow that the outward actions, (except sacrifice) or gestures expressive of the sense of these words, are

[o] I do not remember that Dr. Middleton ever calls any but such *the men of sense*; of *learning*, of *piety*; but, the *eminent and learned* presbyter Vigilantius, the *pious* and learned Dr. *Whiston*, &c. It is a maxim with him that truth is always on the persecuted side. (The Church's persecution, whatever the civil magistrate may do, is excommunication only) therefore it was on the side of the incestuous Corinthian.

[p] 2 Kings ix. 2 John vii. 20. Jon. vii. 20.

[q] Revela. xiv. 4.

[r] *Worship*, *adoration*, in the Latin vulgate, LXX. Greek, Hebrew, but are many times used to signify an inferior

no less equivocal. That notwithstanding the likeness or sameness, of sound and gesture, they are nevertheless infinitely different, in the language of the heart, when applied to creatures or the Creator respectively, as such.

XIV. That, whatever instruments God made use of in miraculous works, or related to his worship, they derived from thence a certain relative holiness [1]; and that the respect, honour, &c. accruing to them on that account, terminated finally in God.

XV. That miracles, which they must own were wrought in behalf of those, who had this faith, who bestowed this honour, or in punishment of those, who derided it, could lose nothing of their credibility, from whatever name this faith might be called by, *superstitious*, or *idolatrous*, by perverse sectarists or infidels. To evince which, I shall not exceed the limits of their several systems.

XVI. Dr. Middleton in his remarks on the Observator[1] says, *that the principal devotion of the fourth century was in all distresses to fly to the tombs of martyrs; prostrating before their reliques . . . believing and affirming that numbers were cured of all sorts of distempers . . . several even raised from the dead*. Farther, *that from the experience of all ages, the belief of such miracles, NEVER had any other effect . . . then to authorise the worship . . . beginning immediately from the moment miracles were indited.*

inferior honour given to creatures: *Promiscuè de Dei & hominum cultu apud LXX usurpatur* says Mr. Legh on Revel. xix. 10, which he confirms from other authors, Gen. xxvii. 7. xlii. 6. 1 Kings xx. 41. iii. 1-16.

[1] Exod. iii. 5. Levit. ii. 3. [2] P. 22.

indited a worship practised this day in the Church of Rome: It must then have began early.

XVII. If God works a cure by dead mens bones, says the Observator, it does not follow that the bones are to be worshipped. But in fact, it did immediately follow, replies Dr. Middleton, has . . . and must follow in confusion of his silly hypothesis[u]. That no kind of worship should follow upon such belief, none at all, but the supreme, due to God only, is a *fillier* hypothesis still; inconsistent with all reason and experience, and all true religion: That a worship followed upon the belief of miracles wrought by reliques, although terminating in God, yet as different and as distant in its immediate object from the supreme, as a creature can be from its Maker, is the only true and rational hypothesis; the only one consistent with experience, and the profession of Christianity.

XVIII. When the royal prophet spoke these inspired words, *adore, or worship the footstool of the Lord, for it is holy*[x]; a kind of worship was due, and paid to the ark of the covenant of the Lord; though an external symbol only of God's presence amongst his people. Over the ark were two images of cherubims, within it miraculous reliques, the *pot of manna*, *Aarons rod that budded*, and the *tables of the covenant*[y]. From the moment this ark became the instrument of divine miracles, immediately, Dr. Middleton has owned, the worship followed; *must* follow, in confutation of any *silly hypothesis* to the contrary. The credibility also of those miracles followed, in spite of

[u] P. 23, [x] Pl. xcvi. 5. [y] Heb. ix. 4.

of any *silly* infidel, or sectarian misconstructions of, or objections, to that worship.

XIX. No *honour, worship, &c.* ever shewed by the Church of Christ to reliques, could surpass, or even equal, either in words, outward gesture or action, magnificence and pomp, that which followed the numerous miracles received, or credited on testimony, which God wrought in approbation of this honour given to the ark of his covenant, or in punishment of its neglect. *Let us fetch the ark of the covenant out of Shilo unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies [z]. The glory is departed from Israel: For the ark of God is taken [a]. It compassed the city of Jericho in the most solemn pomp of religious procession, and [b] (what these systems will declare incredible to be effected by the sign of the cross and christian faith) it threw down gates shut against it; and the walls of Jericho fell down flat [c]. Joshua . . . fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel [d]. Fifty thousand and threescore and ten men of Bethshemesb, smitten by the Lord, because they had looked into the ark [e]. Uzzah struck dead because he* put

[z] Sam.

[a] Sam.

[b] A like miraculous fact testified to have been done by Christian faith with the sign of the Cross, Dr. Middleton sufficiently confuted by these very words. *And as to this article, the sign of the Cross, the frequent use of it, the miracles ascribed to it, in the fourth and second century, citing Titulian; the popperies of the Church of Rome, he says, are much less extravagant.* Answer to Jesuit Cabal. p. iii. NB. What must he have said to these Jewish miracles?

[c] Jos. vi. 10. [d] Jos. vii. 6. [e] 1 Sam. vi. 19.

put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it [f]. Michol punished with barrenness for her derision: Obed-edom blessed, &c. All which language, outward actions or gestures, might certainly have afforded as good pretext for the then sectarist or infidel systems, as for any modern, to maintain; that upon these miracles, no worship of the ark itself followed, but the supreme worship due only to the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubims [g].

XX. And in fact, the unbelieving *Philistines* ascribed the same idolatry to the Jewish people, as they practised themselves. *Wo unto us: Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the desert [h]. Their Gods are the Gods of the hills [i]. They brought the ark into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon [k].* Every sect and schism, which opposed their golden calf, or calves, against the Lord of hosts, speaks the language of these *Philistines*. These are the Gods, &c. and those, which opposed their oracles against God's, must have done the same. That is, they themselves, given up to the greatest superstition and idolatry, must have accused the Jewish Church of a worse; and robbed her of all her miracles, or denied them all, or challenged all to themselves.

XXI. But Dr. *Middleton*, with his adverse systems, must own, that all this language concerning the ark of God, (some of which taken literally and in full rigour would be false and blasphemous); notwithstanding; all these outward actions

[f] 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. [g] Ib. 2. [h] 2 Sam. iv. 8.
[i] Ib. v. 2. [k] Kings i. xx. 23.

actions, processions, prostrations, &c. the worship, which followed these miracles, and *must* always follow whatever are wrought by such instrumentency; by the *bones* of a dead prophet, *aprons*, or *bandkerchiefs*, which had touched the bodies of saints, by the *hem* of a garment, was perfectly consistent with that worship, which was due to God only and was also consistent with the purity of faith of the Jewish Church and with the credibility of all her miracles on human testimony.

XXII. But if this honour or worship did not obstruct the credibility of the Jewish and gospel miracles: neither can it, of all the primitive, or of all succeeding Christian miracles. Not of the primitive, say all the Doctor's adversaries: nor of all subsequent miracles, says the whole Christian Church; and Dr. *Middleton*, owning this universal consent of faith in Christians of every denomination down to *Luther's* days, owns also the truth of this inference.

As one of the main arguments employed by both parties against their proscribed miracles, is raised on the pretended superstition or idolatry of the honour given to such and such miraculous instruments, which is pretended to be an honour due to God only: It is proper to examine, what honour these adversaries of the Church, and of the Doctor, must own was given to them, in the primitive and pure centuries.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I. **I**T having been asserted by these systems [1], that the whole knowledge of the ways and will of the Creator possible for man to acquire, must be from a contemplation of what he has actually done; we have accordingly looked abroad, and from the analogy betwixt the Old and New Testament-miracles, and succeeding Christian miracles, have discovered that there is no rejecting the latter as incredible, but on the same principles that the first might have been rejected. This brings us to an end of all the miracles admitted by Dr. *Middleton*, who fixes the cessation of them at the end of the lives of the Apostles. St. *John* long outlived all the rest. But our adversaries think, they have found a mighty objection in the Revelation of this Apostle [m] against the honour and worship just mentioned. This object on indeed does not relate to reliques, but to angels. Yet as this worship seems to be a natural consequence, and allowed by Dr. *Middleton*, a remark on the objection will not appear much out of place. The passage referred to, does not derogate from the lawfulness of the worship, and this is evidently supported by the behaviour of the same inspired Apostle, who mentions afterwards [n], that *he fell down to worship before the feet of the angel*, on which account we do not find, that he was re-proved. All that we can learn from the sacred text is, that the angel declined the honour which
the

[1] Chap. I. art. v.

[m] ch. xix. 10.

[n] ch. xxii. 8.

the Apostle intended by this submissive prostration. His words (*ὅσα μὴ*) import no more. He owns himself his fellow-servant; reverences in him the beloved disciple of *Christ*, the dignity of an Apostle, *the testimony of Jesus*, and the rank of an [o] Assessor of *Christ* at the judgment of men and angels. The Apostle honours in the person of an Angel the Messenger of God; and, after the Angel had declined the worship of the Apostle, St. *John* repeats this worship, and thereby not only solves this great argument, but demonstrates the fitness and sanctity of an action frequently authorized in the scriptures, and mentioned to have been practised not with regard to angels only [p], but to men. This does not suit with the principles of these our systematists. No; they must in their own defence bring in the whole Church of *Christ* guilty of superstition and idolatry; and, that this may surprise the less, they fix the same odious charge on an Apostle, whom they arraign, over and above, of wilfully persevering in idolatry. For, in their notions, what can excuse him from material idolatry in the first instance, and from formal in the second? Well may he say with another great Apostle, in regard to both: *If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel [q], than that which I was inspired with from the bosom of our Lord, let him be anathema.*

II. We have seen the honour and worship due to reliques subsisting through both Testaments: this faith and veneration of them miraculously rewarded, the dishonour of them punished as miracu-

[o] 1 Cor. vi. 3. [p] Genes. xviii. 2. ch. xix. 1. ch. xxiii. 7, 12. ch. xxvii. 29. ch. l. 18. Numb. xxii. 31. Josh. v. 14, 15. Ruth. ii. 10, &c. [q] Gal. i. 8.

raculously. All this consistently with Dr. *Middleton's* and his adversaries hypotheses. What honour was given them in the primitive centuries, we are next to learn from the Doctor's adversaries. *We, indeed, readily grant*, says Mr. *Brooke* [r], *that miracles were wrought by the bones of Elisha . . . that a healing virtue was inherent in the garment of Christ. That the aprons and handkerchiefs which but touched the body of St. Paul, retained the same virtue, we all grant and confess. What difficulty then, or inconsistency, in one's confessing also, that in those times which followed next after the Apostles, a certain miraculous power was displayed of curing diseases, of raising the dead to life, by these instruments, the bones and reliques of martyrs, the sign of the cross, the anointing with oil?* No difficulty sure in confessing and believing this, to any who believe their Bible, and do not reject all other testimony [s]. But the difficulty lies in confuting the inconsistency objected to them by Dr. *Middleton*, after their allowing these miracles, by these instruments, and on human testimony; and their deny-

[r] *Defensio miraculorum*, p. 4. *Miracula quidem ossibus Elisæi patrata esse facile concedimus . . . vestibus Christi potestatem medendi inhæsisse; eandemque linteola retinuisse potestatem, quæ corpori Paulino admoverentur, confitemur omnes . . . Quidni igitur concederemus & iis in temporibus, quæ sunt apostolorum tempora continuò subsequuta, per ossa reliquiasque martyrum, per signum crucis, per olei unctionem, mirificam quandam potentiam apparuisse in sanandis ægrotationibus, excitandisque etiam à morte hominibus. Quidni, inquam, hoc concederemus?*

[s] *Neque profecto verum est, quemadmodum quidam existimant, quod sibi parum consent nostri homines. Z. Brooke, ib. p. 3.*

denying all others of the like nature, how well soever attested. For if the testimony, as to facts possible, of the wisest and best of men; if an universal testimony may be rejected in one case, how can it subsist in any; or, indeed, how can any testimony at all subsist?

III. A late learned Primate of the Church of England [t], and expositor of her doctrine, declares in her name, *that for the honour that is due to reliques, no Protestant will ever refuse, whatever the primitive Church paid them. We are ready to profess our opinion, that we judge it neither to be offensive to God, nor fit to be scrupled by any good man . . . that the Church may testify this honour by more or less outward signs and marks of respect.* We are next to learn from the same author, what kind of honour was given them by the Church, in her most primitive state, immediately after the death of the Apostles.

IV. *We read, says he [u], in the acts of the martyrdom of this blessed Saint (St. Ignatius) with what a mighty care those who went with him to Rome, and were the eye-witnesses of his sufferings, gathered up the few hard bones of his body, which the lions had left; and how they brought them back in a kind of TRIUMPH to his church at Antioch. And we read, with what POMP they were many ages after taken up from the place where they were first buried, and carried, by the command of the younger Theodosius, within the city: insomuch, that, as our historians*

[t] An exposition of the doctrine of the Church of England, &c. by Archbishop Wake, p. 16.

[u] Genuine epistles of the apostolical Fathers. Preliminary disc. to those of St. Ignatius, p. 36.

rians observe [x], there was a festival solemnity established upon that occasion; and annually observed to the very time in which they wrote, in remembrance of it. These few, the only remaining of his HOLY bones, say the acts of his martyrdom [y], were carried to Antioch, and there put up in a napkin, as an inestimable treasure left to the Church by the grace that was in the martyr. The authors of these acts, the Saint's companions, the night following his martyrdom, watching with tears in the house (thus they speak) and praying to God with our bended knees, that he would give us weak men some assurance of what had been before done; it happened that, falling into a slumber, some of us on the sudden saw the blessed Ignatius standing by us, and embracing us: Others beheld the blessed martyr praying for us, others, as it were, dropping with sweat, as if he were just come from his great labour, and standing by our Lord.

V. In the honour, which this primitive Church paid to God's Saints and Martyrs, and to their *holy bones* and reliques, she believed she honoured God. And *when God*, says this learned Primate [z], *shewed such regard for them, they concluded, that they could never almost do enough, to satisfy their respect to them. To this we must ascribe the care to gather up their remains, the honour paid to them, and the solemnities with which they were deposited in the earth their anniversary meetings at their tombs and monuments, &c.* For this reason, we may add, that the Church of Smyrna taking up the
bones

[x] Evagr. lib. i. c. 16. Niceph. lib. xiv. c. 44.

[y] Num. xii.

[z] Prelim. disc. p. 126.

bones of St. Polycarp [a], which she esteemed more precious, than the richest jewels, and tried above gold, deposited them, where it was FITTING, where being gathered together with joy and gladness, the Lord shall grant unto us to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom of whom may we be made also companions [b]. At whose feet may we be found in the kingdom of Jesus Christ [c]. We have made known to you, say the companions of St Ignatius to the Church of Antioch, both the day and the time (being assured, comparing the vision of our dreams, of the blessedness of the Saint, beatificantes Sanctum) that being assembled together according to the time of his martyrdom, we may COMMUNICATE with the combattant.

VI. On what faith was this communion of these Christians with the Saint, and the Saint's with them, founded? On this faith, that he was in the state of bliss and glory, *standing by the Lord*: that with a perfect charity (for *charity never ceaseth [d]*, but is perfected) he *still embraced them*; that in this spirit of charity, and according to the order of fraternal society, he *prayed for them*. These Christians contended, *who should soonest touch the flesh of a Saint, and who should be made partaker of his holy flesh [e]* and acquire the least share of that *inestimable treasure, inestimable from the grace, which was in the martyr*: and can it be thought, that this faith made them less earnest to be made partakers of his *holy prayers*, and intercession; of that sacred incense [f], which with *barps and golden*

[a] Relation of his martyrdom, n. xvii.

[b] N. xviii. [c] N. xxii. [d] 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

[e] Martyrdom of Polycarp, n. xiii. n. xvii.

[f] Rev. v. 8.

golden vials is offered before the Lamb, and with the prayers of the Saints, ascends up before God out of the angel's hand [g]? *The communion of Saints*, says a learned Protestant [b], *will necessarily require . . . that the living beg of God a part and interest in those prayers, which they, who are so near to God in his kingdom, tender to him without ceasing for the Church upon earth.*

VII. However unanimous *English* Protestants are represented by their *Primate*, in allowing the same honour to holy reliques, as was paid to them by the *primitive Church*; and in their profession of the same faith, and the motives, on which this honour was grounded; viz. the truth of the primitive miracles, and of the faith, which they confirmed: they must be owned as unanimous, at least, in rejecting the honour paid to reliques by the Church of Christ in the fourth, fifth, and succeeding centuries, as *superstitious*, &c. her faith, as *erroneous*; her miracles, as *imposture*, grounded on no better, than this assumed, precarious principle, that a *Luther*, a *Calvin*, and their disciples, at this distance of time, better understood the faith and practice of primitive antiquity and the Apostolic Fathers, from the few fragments left us of their writings, than a *Basil*, an *Ambrose*, a *Jerome*, a *Chrysostome*, an *Augustin*, a *Gregory Nazianzen*, called the Divine by excellence, who so nearly succeeded them, and who were taught by them, and who gathered, as I may say, the succession of their doctrine after their death [i]. All these, and

[g] Rev. viii. 4.

[b] *Thorndike's* just Weights and Measures, chap. xvi. p. 107.

[i] Bishop of *Meaux's* exposition, sect. iii.

and many more, the famous *Daill* [k] owns, prayed to Saints, and honoured their reliques, as the Catholic Church now does. Nay, he quotes several express texts, by which he shews clearly, that [l] they pretended, in praying to Saints, to follow the example of their predecessors.

VIII. But by this same principle, their better understanding the Church's doctrine, than the Church herself, and by this precarious assumption, condemning her doctrines as idolatrous, her miracles as forgery, or condemning them, because opposite to their own; Jews, Heretics, Heathens, condemn even St. Ignatius's, St. Polycarp's doctrine and miracles; which doctrine the Churches of *Antioch* and *Smyrna* received from the disciples of St. John, and St. John from his Lord and Master. Thus we see the Jews, combined with *Heathens*, and both impelled by *Satan*, opposing themselves against this primitive veneration of Saints reliques, under this same pretext, viz. of its being the worst of *superstition* and *idolatry* [m]. And what they did, all the then heretics must have done in their own defence. For condemned by *Polycarp*, with a *Marcion*, as the first-begotten of *Satan* [n], they could do no other than condemn his doctrine and miracles,

[k] In the book he published against the tradition of the Catholic Church.

[l] Bishop of *Meaux*'s exposition of the Catholic doctrine, p. 4.

[m] Christianity was called by *Pliny*, *superstitio prava & immodica*; by *Tacitus*, *execrabilis superstitio*.

[n] *Do you know me?* said *Marcion* to St. *Polycarp*. *Yes, replied the Saint, I know you well. You are the first-begotten of Satan. Cognoscis nos? respondit, cognosco primogenitum diaboli.* Hieron. de Script. Eccles.

racles, by which they stood condemned. The proof of this is clear from the testimony of the Church of Smyrna: *When the emulous, and envious, and wicked adversary of the race of the Just (the devil) saw the greatness of the martyrdom he took all possible care, that not the least remainder of his body should be taken away by us and to that end he suggested to Nicetas, the father of Herod and brother of Alcè, to go to the governor, and binder him from giving us his body to be buried. Lest, says he, FORSAKING him that was crucified, they should begin to WORSHIP this Polycarp [o].*

IX. Thus, when the synagogue turned sectarist, as it did after rejecting the Messiah, we find Jews, Hereticks and Infidels joined in no holy union with the *arch-adversary of the just*, in this very instance condemning the Church's miracles, and the worship necessarily *following* them, on this precarious foundation, that their systems, in matters of religion being right, all others must be wrong. Therefore, all miracles opposite to this foundation, though seen with their eyes, were but meer illusion; all testimony incredible; all other worship superstition. One might think, that the contradictions, which necessarily result from such a principle, truth being essentially self-consistent, would be conviction sufficient against them all, were there no other. No, these contradictions must follow, yet they must be all in the right; and for the very same reason, or rather the same prejudice.

X. Thus, in these modern systems, whilst we see one professing, that all Protestants give *the same*

[o] Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, from archbishop Wake's translation, n. xvii.

same honour to reliques as the primitive Church ever did; subscribing to the truth of her miracles; and to her doctrines, necessary consequences of such miracles: We see another, professing equal zeal for protestancy, and maintained by protestant divines of as distinguished learning, declare; that such veneration and honours which were paid to the reliques of the saints Ignatius and Polycarp, and which no Protestant was to refuse, would plunge us at once into the depths of popery [p]. That if we believe the primitive writers, we cannot condemn the practice of the Church of Rome, in venerating reliques, evidently grounded on them [q]. That the primitive fathers laid a sure foundation of popery, and left sufficient funds for its full perfection [r]. That in these very primitive ages (although especially in the third, fourth and fifth) the chief corruptions of popery, were either actually introduced, or the seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits, which we now see [s]. That Romulus and the primitive kings may be as well denied to be the founders of Heathen Rome, as the primitive Fathers, of papal Rome [t]. That with respect to instruments, by which it is allowed, that God worked miracles; and allowed by another system [u] the most apt, expedient, and necessary, as holy oil, the sign of the Cross, &c. they are the same now in the Roman Church [x]: Nay, that the fopperies of the Church of Rome are much less extravagant than those of the primitive ages, than those

[p] Dr. Middleton's remarks on the Jesuit Cabal, p. 118.

[q] Ib. p. 100. [r] Introduct. Disc. 8^e Ed. p. 16.

[s] Ib. remarks p. 101, 102.

[t] See Chap. i. Art. X. [u] Ib. iii. [x] Ib.

those of the second century. For Tertullian is cited in proof of it; and in confutation of an Arch-deacons pretence, that *the ill uses of the sign of the Cross, of oil, (he should have added, spittle and salt) unknown*, he says, *to the Pastors and offices near three hundred years, is nothing to the mimicry and fopperies of popish rituals* [y]. We see all this declared by so great an adversary of popery, and whom even his own adversaries in this controversy acknowledge, *a man of so uncommon a genius, vouchsafing to instruct mankind; of so superior sagacity, and understanding exalted above the ordinary pitch, as to see farther into a subject at one view, and discern at once the exact relations and consequences of it, which the generality of readers with all their study and application may not be able to do* [z].

XI. Again, when we see all these modern systems, all that were ever founded on any Christian plan, agreeing in this only, that there is an essential connexion betwixt the truth of Christ's mission and the truth of his miracles; the truth of the Apostles doctrine, of the Apostolic Church, and the truth of their miracles; yet see them reduced to contradict each other, as to the truth of succeeding doctrines and miracles; it is evident, that all which they hold credible or incredible in either, their truth and falshood respectively, is wholly and necessarily derived from the nature of their systems: It is evident that the grand foundation of this respective system is this
preca-

[y] Free Inquiry p. 25. P. S. To Introduct. Disc. 80. Ed. p. 104, 107. to the same purpose.

[z] Pref. p. 22. of *Brooke's Examination of the Free Inquiry*.

precarious principle : *Our systems are true ; therefore every miracle and doctrine, inconsistent with them, must be false.*

XII. To Mr. Brooke and to many other [a], learned and grave Divines, the cause of Christ's and his Apostles miracles is so much the same with that of the Fathers, that the miracles of these last are worthy of all faith, *omni fide digna*, equally with the others, if not more, than those recorded by St. Luke only [b]. To other as learned, though not so grave Divines, to the chief of the adverse system ; to Mr. Toll, to the author of the *previous questions*, the cause is not the same at all ; and the Fathers miracles are worthy of no manner of credit ; to the last [c] they are a subject of such profane drollery, as might suit better a *Lucian* ; or the Poet of *Epicurus's herd* he is so fond of quoting, (with the wit of neither) than a Christian

[a] Vellem equidem isti homines perfecissent tandem, quod jactitant, miracula Christi ejusque Apostolorum majori nobis commendari fide atque auctoritate, quam miracula istorum Patrum primævorum. Defens. miracul. p. 23. Cum multi alii docti & graves viri idem una mecum sentiant. Ib. p. 26. recipienda tanquam omni fide digna Ib.

[b] Miracula Apostolorum ferè omnia unius D. Lucæ auctoritate nitantur . . . miracula Patrum, non unius sed plurium testimonio credenda sunt. Ib.

[c] In a letter to the author of the Gentleman's Magazine July 1751, p. 312. Dr. Sykes by name is called to account for a false translation of Justinians words, Col. l. i. tit. 27. *miserabiliter locutos*, into an Anglicism, they *spoke miserably* : and told, that, in his old drolling way of laughing at every thing, especially what has the appearance of being sacred, he has the misfortune of overshooting and exposing himself instead of his adversaries. See his previous questions p. 54.

tian of any sect, much less such a *Theologue* and *Veteran* in polemics. To some, *the gulf of scepticism*, or *the depths of popery*, swallow up all such as deny the truth of a succession of miracles from the Apostles to the fifth century [d]. To others Christianity is safe, its foundation firm, if every miracle, since the Apostles, prove rank imposture [e]. In short, the variety and contradiction of systems, ancient and modern, is endless concerning a chymical cessation of all true miracles in the Church of *Christ*. When ever sects broke off from her communion; they contested, when miracles ceased; why they ceased; which only of these systems is the true; which has true miracles; most pretending to some of their own, though denying them to every other sect no less, than to the Church. These contradictions, beginning with the first heresy, have continued through every age, and section of ages, and will do to the end of the world. *For it is necessary that heresies should be, that the elect may be approved* [f]. Though these contradictions of the opposite systems divide the antagonists amongst themselves, yet they do not hinder them from joining in concert with all their forces against the only *consistent* and *unalterable system* of the *miraculous* providence of God, first in building his Church upon a rock; and next, in preserving her unmoveable as his word by his almighty power against the gates of hell and all the efforts of man.

XIII. In these contests, concerning the credibility or incredibility of Church miracles in different

[d] Jesuit Cabal, Dr. *Chapman*, p. Ult.

[e] Dr. S--- 9 *Observer* on the *Introd. Disc.* and *Pref.* to the *Free Inquiry*, p. vi. [f] 1 *Cor.* xi. 19.

ferent ages, they not only see, that they argue from a precarious foundation, a *petitio principii*, a beggarly and puerile sophism; but are not ashamed to object it to each other. Whereas, not only the foundation itself is sophistical, but every topic of argument employed by them to support it, is so too. *Expediency* of miracles, *inexpediency*, *necessity*, *unnecessity*, *absurdity*, *non-absurdity*, *superstitiousness*, *idolatry*, with their *contraries* are words, and not arguments in the mouths of these disputants, who abuse the *terms*, and have no respect for the *universal* sense of the *universal Church*, nor that of the best and wisest of all mankind in *all* times and in *all* places [g]; and, with regard to their particular systems are (to make use of their expressions) *prejudiced*, *interested*, *bigotted*, and *neecessitated*, to fasten, at any rate, the odious marks of idolatry, superstition and absurdity on the miracles and doctrine of the Church, for proof of which *mere assertions* they appeal to the sense of their accomplices in error and incredulity, who are as prejudiced as themselves.

XIV. The precariousness of Dr. Middleton's *incredibility of the testimony and incredibility of the facts* with respect to the miracles of the primitive Fathers and their witnessing them, is observed and objected to him by his adversary Mr. Brooke. Who declares, he does not see, what greater authority can be derived from the books of the Evangelists, or from the life and manners of the Apostles, to make facts credited, than may be had, either from the writings, or from the life and

[g] Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus Vincen. Lyrin.

and manners of those primitive Fathers [b]. The ridicule therefore which the Doctor endeavours to throw on their miracles by his narration of them, his treating them as *absurd*, and the Father's as either *credulous*, or *forgers* of them, is accounted by him a *meer begging of the question*. *Utitur manifestâ petitione principii* [i]. For as the *incredibility* of the facts is assumed, so likewise is the *credulity* or *forgery* of the Fathers; for they are no otherwise *credulous*, or *forgers*, than because they relate miracles. *What*, says he, *is a Carneades, a Chrysippus, an Epicurus, required to refute such arguing* [k]? *This is not proving, but assuming, and assuming what is by no means credible* [l].

Now, not to observe here, upon Mr. Brooke's canonizing, i. e. putting the authority of the miracles and writings of the Fathers upon a level with the sacred *Canon* of the Scriptures; may not what he objects with so much truth against the Doctor, be retorted against him with equal truth? For what reason can be assigned with any show of truth, why all the Fathers should be *fools* or *knaves*, I may say, all Christians, immediately after the expiration of one or the other of their periods,

[b] Neque videtur aut ex libris Evangelistarum, aut ex vita moribusque Apostolorum major autoritas petenda esse ad faciendam fidem, quam quæ peti potest aut ex scriptis aut ex vitâ moribusque istorum Patrum primævorum, Z. Brooke Defens. mirac. p. 33.

[i] Brooke ibid. p. 39.

[k] Num vero opus est ad hæc, refellenda Carneade, vel Chrysippo? num etiam Epicuro? Ibid. p. 33.

[l] Etenim, hoc non est probare, sed assumere rem, nullo modo probabilem. Ibid. p. 6.

periods, but the weakness of their systems, destitute of all foundation in truth, and, in effect, of all appearance even of probability? This reduces the unfortunate authors, *first*, to suppose, and, *next*, to declare the authority of Church-miracles to be but weakly supported, which, as any one may perceive, is precariously assumed. But let us hear the Doctor.

XV. Protestants, he says, universally affirm, that miracles have long since ceased utterly; but cannot agree when, nor are able to assign any probable criterion, by which we may declare they proceeded thus far and no farther. . . . The most illustrious Fathers of the 4th century testify miracles after the conversion of the Roman empire. . . . Dr. Chapman defends some miracles of the 5th. . . . His fellow-labourer, Dr. Berriman, at the end of the same century, which cannot, he says, be discredited, without shaking the credit of all history [m]. To say that where superstitious rites are established, or where the facts themselves are incredible. . . . such miracles are to be rejected, is to BEG the question, and not to prove it, a too PRECARIOUS way of reasoning. . . . because what is incredible to me, may seem credible to another [n]. Dr. Berriman, he continues, has over-ruled every plea of that kind. . . . by declaring, that we have no reason to dispute the truth of the facts, on account of the miraculousness, or natural incredibility of them, unless it can be proved, as it certainly cannot be, that miracles were ceased in that age. . . . What he has thus declared of the miracles of the 6th century, says Dr. Middleton, may be as justly applied to those of the 16th. . . . The incredibility of the fact, of these later ages.

[m] Dr. Middleton's Remarks on the Observer, p. 26, & seq.

[n] Ibid. p. 40.

ages, . . . the same as of the foregoing ; in both, alike over-ruled by the authority of witnesses . . . veracity the same . . . and convincing as human testimony can be. Testimony [o], by persons of the most eminent character, for probity, learning and dignity . . . to this very day. So unanimous and universal testimony by all historians [p], that there is not a single point in all history so unanimously affirmed as a continual succession of miracles through all ages.

As the superstition of rites and doctrines, the incredibility of facts, is all precarious in his adversaries system, so is also their continuation of miracles. For, though in the absolute promises of our Lord, that miracles should follow *those that believe*, and that *faith itself* should be miraculous ; there is, says the Doctor [q], no limitation as to time ; this they supply, from their own imagination, and extend and limit it, according to their several systems previously entertained : supply by the help of a *postulatum* . . . viz. that they continued as long as they were necessary to the Church.

No: not to the Church, but to the truth of those several contradictory systems previously entertained. It being no less necessary to the truth of his adverse systems, that no miracles should continue after several precarious periods, than to the truth of his, that none continued after the Apostles. The necessary consequences of their systems necessarily affect their Church, which must stand or fall (by their concurrent testimony) with the truth or falsehood, of their several adverse systems. *The more we struggle*, says the Doctor,
the

[o] Pref. to Free Inquiry, p. xv.

[p] Ibid.

[q] Ibid. p. xi.

the more we are entangled [r]. No part left but to reject all miracles, agreeable to the INTEREST of Protestants, or admit all. i. e. A succession of some true in all ages, if he means to speak like a Catholic; who no more admits, or rejects, all miracles, than he admits, or rejects, all histories. On this proof alone, viz. that miracles are ceased, the strength and security of the Protestant cause chiefly depends [s].

XVI. Not to insist on all the important consequences, which may be deduced from these concessions, it suffices to observe, that they own their principles precarious; and well they may; for they are principles, which serve alike, as they please, to reject or admit miracles that rest upon equal authority: and consequently, by their own confession, all *criteria* possible to be assigned by either of the contending parties, must be precarious, with regard to true *miracles* or real *forgeries*. For, as the *reality* and *forgery* of a *miracle* are equally facts, and capable of being proved, both require alike clear and undoubted proofs, which may bear the test.

CHAP. III.

I. **T**HE confessed inability, which Protestants are under, of assigning any probable *criterion*, to determine, when miracles entirely ceased, proceeds from the same cause, as the impossibility of assigning a *criterion*, by which we may discern, that there is no truth in profane and sacred history; no, not even in the prophecies and promises

[r] Remarks on the Observator, p. 40, & seq.

[s] Ibidem.

mises of Christ. Innumerable sects in the three first centuries opposed the truth of the doctrine and miracles of the Church. The opposition was grounded on the same principle, and the sectarists were reduced to the same necessity, which obliged our modern Reformers to follow their Example. When our Protestants shall discover, which sect among so many had right to oppose the doctrine and miracles of the Church, they will find the *criterion*, which they seek; and better proofs against the Church of *Christ*, than *He* gave for it. As this was not discovered in the course of so many ages, among such numbers interested in the discovery, it may well be despaired of by the help of our modern investigators, among their antiquated, though new-vampt systems. They have as little hopes of discovering entire truth of doctrine, and true miracles to confirm it, out of the communion of the Church; and as little ground to promise themselves, that they shall discover a total cessation of her miracles, error in doctrine, *superstition*, *idolatry* of her worship subsisting in any time, or place, but in their precarious assumptions, the offspring of their fruitful imagination.

II. As far as we have proceeded, we have discovered nothing in these adverse systems, but their contradictions; nor any thing alledged by either side against miracles, which some maintain and others reject; nothing against the Church's miracles, which they all reject; but what the professed *rank* heresies in the Apostles days, or in the primitive Ages, might and must have alledged against those of the then Church of Christ. For, but one single divine miracle allowed in proof of the Church's doctrine, was then as incompatible with

with the truth of any such sectarian, or infidel system, as with any modern. This is the plan I proceed upon. And if throughout the whole, we discover the same contradictions still, the same unity of principles in these modern, as in all ancient systems, that ever oppugned the truth of revealed religion, of the Church of God, and of miracles [t], (*God's own testimony*) there needs no other proof, that they are all alike inconsistent with the truth of Christianity.

III. This plan is grounded on two simple and self-evident principles. *First*, Truth cannot be the foundation of falsehood, nor falsehood the foundation of truth. *Secondly*, Contradictions cannot follow from truth, but from falsehood only [u].

Now

[t] God bearing them witness by signs and wonders. Heb. ii. 4.

[u] Mr. Brooke, to justify himself and brethren against this charge of contradiction, *It has been well observed*, he tells us, *by a late writer* (the writer of the two epistles) *that if from the division of the defenders of these miracles among themselves, concerning the precise era of their continuance in the Church, a Middleton thinks to prove the invalidity of them all, we may easily prove the same of Christianity itself, or indeed of any other truth in the world.* [Examination of the Free Inquiry, p. 292. Epist. i. p. 23.]

But as it is self-evident, that no contradictions can flow from Christian or revealed truth, or from any truth in the world, but from error only, either directly opposing truth, or pretending to defend it; so is it no less evident, that the contradictions of all these systems must proceed from this last source; from which heresies were to take their rise, and by which *Christ himself*, the eternal truth, *was to be set up as a mark to be contradicted*. The fundamental error of all these systems

Now, if all these systems are built on false principles; if contradictions do and must follow from all of them, they are all false alike. And, that this is the case of them all, has been hitherto, and will be farther proved, as we proceed; 1st, from principles, wherein they are shewn to agree with all sects, past and possible; 2ly, from their inevitable contradictions. The consequence is manifest; *viz.* that all these systems are false and inconsistent with Christian verity.

IV. Of all truths the revealed are the greatest; of all proofs, the divine, by works and word of prophecy, are the best: The worship and Church established by God, and secured by his promises in a permanency of truth *for ever* stands on the firmest foundation; yet error has opposed the greatest contradictions [x] against these truths, their evidence, the worship, and the Church, which has God for its author. We have observed,

has been already pointed out by the author of these two epistles; their *compounding for a part, which they can never retain*; whilst they leave *Christianity*, the whole of Christianity in all succeeding ages, not *defenceless* only, but abandoned and given up by them to *the conjunction of the most malignant qualities* that can infect the heads and hearts of men; whilst all their *division among themselves* is in reality concerning the *precise era*, when this *malignant conjunction* is to be diffused by them over the *Catholic Church of Christ*, and ever after to continue in it: and whilst they make the *cause* of Christ and that of his Catholic Church *the same*, during a part of her duration; and ever after make her *cause the same* with that of *Satan*.

[x] Positus hic est in ruinam . . . & in signum cui contradicetur. Luke ii. 34, 35.

served, that every heathen and sectarian system has impugned the Church of Christ by a precarious supposition of error in her doctrine, and imposture in her miracles, contrary to the greatest and best testimony of God and man. Heathens, as various and numerous, as their several deities, who worshipped *crime* with rites as *criminal* [y]; sects nominally *christian*, really *anti-christian*; *enemies to the cross of Christ*; *whose end is destruction*; *whose God is their belly*; and *whose glory is in their shame* [z]; contradictory in every thing else, have unanimously agreed in this, to attack the Church of Christ, in the very same way; by fixing superstition on her doctrines, that they might fix imposture on her miracles.

V. What Dr. *Middleton* has said of his truths, for the discovery of which *he spent the whole course of a studious and laborious life*, may be well applied (error, equally with truth, being discoverable by its source) to these principles and contradictions. Accordingly, *we have pursued and traced them to their source; without any reserve, or caution of pushing the discovery too far; or opening too great a glare of it to the public* [a]. We look upon the discovery of fundamental errors in systems of religion, as a valuable acquisition to society; which cannot possibly hurt, or obstruct the good effect of any . . . truth whatsoever. And, if by this discovery, systems, religions, Churches, built on such foundations, prove self-contradictory and false, we must say as coolly, as the Doctor has said of a much

[y] Herod. lib. i. Strabo l. xv. Athen. l. lxiii.

[z] Philip. iii. 18, 19.

[a] Pref. to Free Inquiry, p. vii.

much more important consequence; *Who can help it [b]?*

VI. Again; No truth can destroy another truth. *For they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily coincide with each other [c].* Very true, for God himself is *Truth*, and all truths are but emanations from this source. There needs then no more to confute all these systems, than to shew, that every one of them necessarily destroys each other: that not one can possibly coincide with any other: that they necessarily contradict each other, and are self-contradictory: contradictory to the truth of divine and human testimony, inconsistent with the most certain and important, the prophetic and revealed truths; and, indeed, with any truth: and if thus FALLING SEPARATELY [d], they mix themselves to strengthen a general current, it must be that of infidelity; all alike betraying error to be their common source, from whence contradictions, and principles common to all ancient and modern anti-christian sects, only can, and necessarily must, flow. Whilst the stream of truth like to the river, *that went out of Eden [e]*, continues the same through the whole course of ages; conveying its rich and fruitful waters, not only to the land of *Havilah, Esbiopia, Assyria*, but to the ut-
most

[b] Free Inquiry, p. 192. See Dr. Church's Vindication, p. 291. charging Dr. Middleton with inexcusable LUKEWARMNESS expressed by this reply, on the supposition that the authority of the books of the New Testament would be rendered precarious and uncertain by his system. [c] Pref. to Free Inquiry, ib. [d] Ib,

[e] Gen. ii. 10.

most limits of the earth: sometimes more abundant, indeed, and overflowing the whole field of the Church; at others, less copious, and reduced into a narrower bed; yet still ever flowing; and incessantly watering and refreshing this *paradise of God*.

VIII. Now, whilst all these modern systems join with all ancient to destroy the Church of God, before they can destroy her miracles: *i. e.* to suppose her doctrines grossly superstitious, before they can suppose her miracles gross imposture; it is remarkable [*f*], *First*, how they unite also to prove each others imposture worse, if possible, than what they charge on the Catholic Church; and to prove, at the same time, her *Christianity* true, or none true. *Secondly*, how they claim miracles themselves, which every other system scorns, as manifest forgery. *Thirdly*, how the truth of the Church's doctrine and miracles has been owned by some of the most eminent among them. *Fourthly*, how her miracles, like those of *Christ* (no exception lying against the testimony) have been ascribed by them to the operation of *Satan*. *Fifthly*, how at length, miracles in general, at a desperate and ultimate shift, have been asserted by them to be but equivocal signs of the truth of doctrines.

VIII. To keep within compass, and to what most immediately concerns my purpose, I shall appeal only to these modern systems, in proof of these five points. As to the *first*: Dr. *Middleton* is charged by his brethren, with aiming at the destruction of *Christianity*, under the mask of *Christia-*

[*f*] Vindication, p. 75.

Christianity. Dr. Church does not see what construction will excuse him from open Deism. He appears to Mr. Brooke, instead of defending religion, to be in reality betraying the very citadel, and yielding up the fortress itself. Although Dr. Church had discovered his open Deism, after lately and repeatedly subscribing the XXXIX Articles; nevertheless, there is something, he says, so extremely black and heinous in a clergyman's purposely endeavouring to undermine and subvert the foundation of the religion he professes to believe and teach, that he cannot bring himself to charge him with such abominable perfidy [g]. Mr. Brooke further declares in his very Preface to the Examination of Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry [h], that many who defend the same opinion with himself, do not only stand up for the NECESSITY . . . of repelling in their disputes, FRAUD BY FRAUD, and abuse by abuse; but likewise maintain, that TRUTH should not always be spoken; and that he had done wrong before [i], and is doing so again . . . by making the cause of the Fathers, and that of Christ and his Apostles the same. But this author's encomiast, and an espouser of his system, has set the fraud and imposture of these systematic Divines, both of Dr. Middleton and his opponents, in so clear a light, with that perspicuous brevity and strength, that in proof of this point, it is abundantly sufficient to refer the reader to his two epistles to the Rev. Mr. Brooke; though there is withal just reason to regret, that no more has appeared on the subject from an author of such distinguished abilities. In the second epistle, *The chief end I had in view*, he says, *when I wrote to you last* (1748)

[g] Vindic. p. 16.

[h] P. xii.

[i] Ib. xiii.

(1748) was to unmask the characters of the PRINCIPAL writers on both sides engaged in the dispute about the miracles of the primitive ages; and to expose to the world their GROSS DISSIMULATION and FRAUD, in jointly subscribing to the truth of a CERTAIN POINT which BOTH OF THEM knew to be false. This point was, that the miracles of the Fathers had no manner of connexion with those of Christ and his Apostles [k]. The author of the Observations on the Introductory Discourse, one of the most principal amongst them, had solemnly declared, that the said Introductory Discourse was a work of no use or significance to us, either as Christians or Protestants . . . that, . . . if not so much as one true miracle could be found after the days of the Apostles, the foundations of Christianity would be equally secure [l]. Yet he is perpetually insinuating, says Dr. Middleton [m], that the very attempt to prove, what, when proved, he affirms to be of no significance, is dangerous to the authority of the gospel.

But the duplicity, the spiritual pride, the hypocrisy, the policy, the hierarchic craft, the inconsistency and self-contradictions, the gross dissimulation and fraud, of these booty antagonists of Dr. Middleton, and of the Doctor himself, have appeared so manifest to the above Lay-Protestant author of the two epistles, that he is tempted to believe them all a set of ancient philosophers disputing for victory in the science of guile and dissimulation [n].

They not only appeared such to him, but he has made it so apparent to the world, that neither the Doctor himself, though challenged to it, when

[k] Second epist. p. 3.

[l] Remarks on Observ. p. 5. [m] Ib, p. 8.

[n] First epist. p. 27.

when living, nor any of the subscribers to the NECESSITY of such dissimulation and FRAUD, in a point of this importance, as far as I can learn, have so much as attempted to confute him. How secure does the Church of Christ stand from the charge of *forgery* and *imposture*, accused only by these self-contradicting systems, none of which can have the least appearance of truth, but from the *necessary concealing* so much *truth*, and employing so much *fraud*? How just is the Apostle's characteristic of the *heretical man*, *self-condemnation* [e]; who draws his accusation and condemnation, and moreover the rash condemnation of God's Church by his opinion, from no other source, than the consciousness of his own *corruption*, and the GUILT of a heart that is SUBVERTED?

IX. These systems are not only self-condemned, but they give testimony of the truth of the Church, whilst they actually accuse and condemn her; one side maintaining an essential connexion betwixt Christ and the Apostles *cause*, and that of the Fathers, their successors; and the other, backed with the consent of the universal Church, maintaining, that this same *identity of cause*, allowed in any age since the Apostles, must hold good through the whole succession of the Church, and pastors of the Church, to this day: one proving, that the rites and doctrines of the first ages were pure *Christianity*; and the other, that this avowed pure *Christianity* was downright *Popery*: both jointly owning, that neither side can be consistent in their principles, but, that the result of this great contention amongst these their ablest Divines must be, the ushering in of *Popery*; or of *Scepticism*,

[e] Tit. iii. 10.

cism, or Popery. They will not allow us to be Christians, says Dr. Middleton, but on such principles which must finally make us Papists [p]. It is visible to me, says Dr. Chapman, that we must either be carried in this scheme, in the last issue, to the standing infallible testimony of his Holiness and the PRESENT CHURCH; as the Papists would persuade us, or into that deep gulph of scepticism and indifferentism, which our Tolands and Tindals have long recommended [q].

Popish Christianity, or no Christianity! The only alternative, the last refuge, for men that are serious and earnest to know what they are to believe and depend on, after so great contests of these their greatest Doctors, on a question, wherein the whole of their Christianity was owned to be at stake! A concession, which neither the motive of self-interest, nor the necessity of self-defence, but the force of truth only, has extorted from the chief of both these systems, to that Church's glory, but to their own confusion!

X. However necessitated every sect is to condemn the Church's miracles as *imposture*, there scarce ever have been any *Infidels*, *Mahometans*, or any sects, which have not claimed miracles themselves, and added this proof of their imposture to the rest. They must all have said, what Dr. Middleton has pronounced in the name of all *Protestancy*, that, not only the miracles of every other sect, but those of the *Catholic Church* of Christ, all utterly ceased at the *memorable period* of their particular *Reformation*, whose light dispelled the charm [r].

As

[p] *Introduct. Disc.* see chap. II. art. xv.

[q] *Jesuit Cabal* p. ult.

[r] *Introduct. Disc.* p. 9.

As much as they pretend miracles have ceased at that period, they know, that the first founder of all these modern systems, *Martin Luther*, not only required miracles of *Muncer*, in proof of his extraordinary vocation [s], but also pretended to such in proof of his own [t]. They know what has been said of such pretences, of a *Luther*, of a *Calvin*, and others, by a *Cocbleus*, *Felicianus Ninguarda*, *Lindanus*, *Alanus Copus*, a *Bolsec*, in his life of *Calvin*; to which miraculous pretences a learned author justly applies *Tertullian's* words concerning the sectarists of his time: *I would produce their miracles*, says he, *but I am conscious, that the miraculousness of them chiefly consists, in their being quite the reverse of those of the Apostles: These raised the dead to life, and those killed the living* [u].

Such signs as these following those that believed their gospel; their greatest miracle, the swift and extensive propagation of it (though incomparably inferior to that of *Arianism* and *Mahometanism*) was what their first century produced. But the pretences to the prophetic, and every other charismatic gift, which have followed all the various sects sprouting from the same root, have continued to this day. What patience would endure the relation of all, that *Davidism*, *Anabaptism*, *Methodism* with its *Journals*, every Protestant

Fana-

[s] Sleid. l. v. edit. 1555. p. 69. in Psal. lxxxvii. magist. t. 3.

[t] De vot. monast. ad Joan. Luth. parentem suum. t. 2. f. 269.

[u] Volo igitur virtutes eorum proferre, nisi quod agnosco maximam virtutem eorum, quâ Apostolos in perversum æmulantur. Illi enim mortuos suscitabant, isti de vivis mortuos faciunt. *Tertul. lib. de Præscrip.*

Fanaticism, has pretended to of this kind? We see even in this present controversy one of the *Antimiddletonian* systematists [x], pointing at miracles no farther off than the valleys of Dauphiny: and this (the gift of tongues) and other miraculous powers so loudly pretended to by the Protestant inhabitants of those valleys, as to give much disturbance to Paris itself; and this not yet fifty years ago. And how did the king of France confute that pretence . . . ? Not by the pen of his scholars, but by (a truly heathen way, says our author quite in earnest) the swords and bayonets of his dragoons.

Just as the pretences of such another, the *convulsionary French* sect, have lately been confuted by the present king. The saint of this sect kept on daily working his wonders, and the frantic, *obscene* [y] gambols continued: till the king's edict interposed, and bricklayers (quite natural powers) with brick and mortar, no less effectually than with sword and bayonet, prevailed over their pretended *supernatural* powers, and mured up both the saint and the miracles.

XI. Whilst these sects boast their own, or deride the miracles of their brethren, their chief and learnedest Divines give testimony to the indefectible truth of the Church's doctrines; by the supposed falshood of which they only can, and do, attack her miracles. The profession which they all make in their Creed of the *Holiness* of the Catho-

[x] A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton, occasioned by his late Free Inquiry, an. 1749. p. 164.

[y] In proof of the phrensy and obscenity of these Convulsionarists, see the first tome of *Lettres Theologiques aux Ecrivains Defenseurs des Convulsions*, p. 646. and throughout his 3 tomes in 4to, printed at Paris in 1740.

Catholic Church, is a foundation from which her unerring authority must necessarily be inferred by the most ignorant : For a body united in the profession and belief of error against revealed truth, is so far from being to be believed *Holy*, that it must be deemed impious, because it is united in a belief contrary to God's holy and revealed truth. This truth is so evident, that even *Luther* infers her unerring or infallible authority from it.

The Church, says he, *is governed by the Spirit of God, and Christ abides with his Church even to the end of the world, and the Church of God is the pillar and ground of truth. This we know, the Creed, which we all embrace, importing as much, I believe the holy Catholic Church : for it is impossible she should err in any the least article [z].*

Calvin also, the founder and patriarch of the other half of divided Protestantism, declares, *that God so recommends the authority of his Church, that he holds his own weakened, when that is violated : For it is not a thing of little importance, that she is called the pillar and ground of truth, and the house of God : by which words St. Paul does signify, that, to the end truth may not perish in the world, the Church is the faithful guardian of it [a].*

The

[z] *Ecclesia spiritu Dei regitur, & Christus cum Ecclesia sua manet usque ad consummationem mundi, & Ecclesia Dei est columna & firmamentum veritatis. Hæc novimus ; nam sic habet & symbolum omnium nostrum, Credo Ecclesiam sanctam Catholicam : & impossibile est illam errare, etiam in minimo articulo. Luther. de Serv. Arbit.*

[a] *Ejus (Ecclesiæ) auctoritatem sic commendat Deus, ut dum illa violatur, suam ipsius imminutam censeat. Neque enim parvi momenti est, quod vocatur columna & firma-*

The celebrated *Whitaker*, one of the most learned *English* Protestants, employs the same scripture to confirm this truth: *The which place*, says he, (1 Tim. iii.) *shews, that truth perpetually resides and dwelleth in the Church, and that it cannot be separated from her, &c.* (truth entire and uncorrupted) *resides only, and perpetually abides in the Church. The Church supports truth, preaches and propounds it to others* [b].

The Church, *Catholic and Holy, governed and guided by the spirit of truth into all truth abiding with her for ever, to the consummation of the world; the pillar and ground of truth, supporting, teaching and propounding truth perpetually; to be made consistent with the truth of any one of these systems, must have been the reverse of all this, either immediately after the death of the Apostles, or as soon after that, as inconsistency and contradiction can agree to fix the date; the evident consequence of which must be, that even the Scriptures and our common Creed, as interpreted by the unanimous consent of the whole Christian world, and by the very founders of all these systems, the pillars and bulwarks of Protestantism, are utterly false.*

But

firmamentum veritatis, & domus Dei: quibus verbis significat Paulus, ne intercidat veritas de mundo, Ecclesiam esse fidam ejus custodem. Calvin. lib. 4. Instit. cap. 1. §. 10.

[b] Qui locus ostendit veritatem in Ecclesia perpetuò residere & remanere, nec ab eâ separari posse, &c. (integra & incorrupta veritas) residet tantum, & perpetuò remanet in verâ Ecclesiâ. Veritatem Ecclesia sustentat, prædicat, proponit aliis. *Controv. 2. quæst. cap. 19. p. 551.*

But *heaven and earth shall pass away, but not the words of Christ* [c], *his words of prophecy, and solemn covenant, resting on his eternal truth.*

The truth of these scriptures being thus universally asserted and acknowledged, we have a true standing miracle, and a confutation of all these systems. For men singly considered, fallible, weak, sinful; yet in a corporate capacity, to *preach and teach entire and uncorrupted truth, all truth, perpetually, to the end of the world*; if this be not a standing miracle, there is no such thing, as a miracle.

To what purpose then has a *Middleton*, a *Daillé*, a *Barbeyrac*, raked all antiquity, to point out human errors in the *Christian Fathers*, nay in the *Apostles of Christ*; but to betray their *own Antichristian errors*? the more numerous the mistakes are, which truth and candor can discover in them, the more does it evince this miracle. For if all human learning and abilities possible, are *insufficient* to preserve men from error, how much more *so* is human weakness?

But let this *Daillé*, this laborious investigator of the *Fathers errors*, bear his testimony to the Church of *Rome*, which his less learned brethren deem so *superstitious and idolatrous*. In his treatise of *Faith grounded upon the Scriptures*, after expounding all the articles of faith held by his Protestant Churches, he declares, that *the Roman Church professes to believe them; that indeed they do not hold all her opinions, but that she holds all their articles of faith*. And in his letter to *M. Monglas*, *Although*, says he, *the opinion of the Lutherans, as well as that*

[c] Luke xxi. 33.

that of Rome, does, according to us, infer the destruction of the humanity of Jesus Christ, yet this consequence cannot be attributed to them without calumny, seeing they formally reject it.

No more can this consequence: *She is guilty of anticristian superstitions and idolatry*: A Protestant inference from her doctrines, not to be attributed to her without calumny, seeing she formally rejects it. They, says a learned English Protestant, that separate from the Church of Rome, as Idolaters, are thereby schismatics before God [d]. Let not them, who charge the Pope to be the Antichrist, and the Papists Idolaters, lead the people by the nose, to believe that they can prove their supposition, when they cannot [e]. What then must become of all these systems, built on calumny, and such idle, groundless suppositions?

XII. The acknowledgment of the truth of the Church's doctrines, is naturally followed by that of her miracles. Accordingly we find this truth confessed by Luther, treating of the Jews: *Through the course, says he, of these fifteen hundred years past, the Jews have heard, that there is the word of God, have seen the greatest signs and wonders, and have raged against them [f]. He farther says: From God we have learned and received it (the Christian faith) as the eternal word and truth of God, confessed and confirmed by miracles and signs, during these fifteen hundred years, to this present time.*

[d] Thorndike chap. i. Just Weights and Measures.

[e] Ibid. chap. ii.

[f] Nunc autem per hos 1500 annos audierunt (Judæi) esse verbum Dei; viderunt maxima signa & mirabilia, & contra fremuerunt. Luther. Tom. 7^o Wittenberg. L. de Judæis, f. 209. b.

time [g]. So evident to him was this succession of miracles, that he exclaims: *Quis enim potest contradicere his?* &c [h]. *Who can gainsay these things, which God to this day worketh miraculously and visibly (ad Divorum sepulchra) at the tombs of the Saints?*

XIII. Observe, how *Luther's* argument, from the truth of Church-doctrines and miracles, reversed by all these systems, and placed on the footing of *universal forgery and imposture*, tends invincibly, not to the conversion of *Jews or Gentils*, but to confirm them both in their blindness: *Viz. Ever since the death of the Apostles, or soon after, the universal Church of Christ, through the course of more than fourteen hundred years, whatever prophecies and promises of her Founder to the contrary notwithstanding, has been the pillar and ground of error; has been declared and confirmed by nought but lying signs, of her own, or of the devil's forging, even to this day.*

XIV. On these words of Christ, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do* [i], the Protestant English Bible printed in 1576, makes this marginal note: *This is referred to the whole body of the Church, in whom this virtue doth shine for ever.*

On these other words of Christ [k], *These signs shall follow those that believe, &c.* *Grotius*, as learned

[g] *A Deo didicimus & accepimus, ut æternum verbum & veritatem Dei, hætenus mille quingentis annis miraculis & signis confessam & confirmatam. Ibid. f. 210. b.*

[h] *Luth. in purgatione quorundam articulorum.*

[i] *John xiv. 12.*

[k] *Mark xvi. 17.*

learned a Protestant as the Reformation has produced, declared, *that he knew no reason why some should confine the gift of miracles to primitive ages only; and farther, persuaded, says Dr. Middleton, from a parity both of reason and evidence also, which was found in every age, that miracles were certainly continued to the later, as well as to the earlier times of the Church* [l], *he did not in the least question, but that the same promise would be fulfilled even now to any one who should preach Christ, in a manner agreeable to his will, to the Heathens, who are ignorant of him.*

This learned and judicious critic [m], who has an undoubted right to the great esteem paid him by the authors of both these systems, in a book he wrote to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, among other proofs, inserts the evidence of those miracles, which were wrought by reliques at the sepulchres of Saints; which most of these systematists, no less than *Le Clerc*, his *Socinian* commentator, reject with scorn [n]. So great, says he, *was the multitude of the miracles, which, as I said above, were wrought at their sepulchres, so many were the witnesses of them, that they forced, even from Porphyry himself* [o], *the confession of this truth.*

XV. With

[l] Cum vero multò etiam seriora sæcula plena sint testimoniis ejusdem rei, nescio quâ ratione moti quidam id donum ad prima tantum tempora restringant. . . Quare si quis nunc etiam Gentibus Christi ignaris. . . Christum, ita ut ipse enunciari voluit, annunciet, promissionis vim duraturam non dubito.

[m] Pref. to Free Inquiry, p. xviii.

[n] Dr. Church's Vindic. p. 68.

[o] Fuit verò prodigiorum apud sepulchra, quæ dixi,

XV. With respect to modern miracles, wrought by the intercession of Saints, we may add *Melanchton's* testimony to that of *Luther*, confessed by the Protestant writer *Joannes Manlius*, from *Melanchton's* report, as done at the memorials of the blessed Virgin at *Ratisbon* and *Grumenthal*: the latter whereof are set down upon the author's own knowledge [p]: *So great was the multitude of these and the like miracles in every age, even in that of Luther, so many were the witnesses of them, that they forced from him, as from Porphyry, the above confessions: Who can gainsay these facts? They forced [q], the learned Brereley observes, a like confession from the unclean spirit: I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God [r].*

Heathens, Mahometans, Jews, Catholics and Protestants, have given testimony to the sanctity and miracles of a *Xavier* in the sixteenth century. Their confession alone suffices to confute all these systems. This subject well deserves being treated apart, if time permit; and then it shall be proved, that the arguments, brought to take off the evidence of *Xavier's* miracles, will equally serve either Jew, or Infidel against Christian miracles. I pass over the testimony of the Protestants, *Bal-deus, Tavernier*, our English minister *Hack'uite* [s],
Mr.

editorum tanta frequentia, tot eorum testes, ut etiam Porphyrio ejus rei confessionem exprefferint. *Vid. says Le Clerc, Cyril. l. x. cont. Julianum. Hieron. cont. Vigilant.*

[p] *Manlius* locorum communium collectanea. Prefixed to the book is this testimony, *Hæc partim scripsit magno dictante Philippo.*

[q] *The Protestant Apology*, p. 544.

[r] *Mark i. xxiv. Luke iv. 34.*

[s] *Life of St. Xavier*, englished by *Dryden*, p. 766, there quoted.

Mr. Pory of Caius College, who confess, that he cured miraculously *the dumb, the lame, the deaf, . . . raised sundry dead persons to life* [t]: nor shall I insist here on Mr. Hartwell's owning miracles in late conversions of Heathens [u], *the which accomplished by massing priests, and after the Romish manner, and tending to the glory of God, shall it be concealed? God forbid!* But with thanks to the Doctors Dodwell and Church, for allowing, *that the gospel is preached and propagated with good success by Romish Fathers in the mission* [x], *is preached to the Heathens, in a manner agreeable to God's will, and with good success*, though Dr. Church adds, *and without miracles* [y], which last his bare assertion, or his works, have not yet proved; with a thankful acknowledgment, I say, of these concessions, I will next consider, what their great *Controversialist Whitaker*, has said to this purpose; how he and the chief champions of Protestantism, being reduced to own miracles wrought in the Church, have, at last, imputed them to *Beelzebub*.

XVI. *Let not Bellarmine think*, says *Whitaker*, in his answer to that Cardinal [z], *that I altogether despise these miracles. I answer, that it may be, such miracles may have been, and may now be wrought,*

[t] In his geographical history of *Africa*, fol. 8. b. & 9. b.

[u] A report of the kingdom of *Congo*, published by Mr. Hartwell, dedicated to the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, epist. to the reader, *post medium*.

[x] Dr. Dodwell's *Free Answer*, p. 11, 12.

[y] Dr. Church's *Vindic.* p. 68, 69.

[z] *Nec putet Bellarminus me omnino hæc miracula contemnere. Respondeo fieri posse ut in regno Pontificio fuerint hujusmodi miracula, & nunc sint. Lib. de Ecclesiâ, p. 353.*

wrought, in the Pontifical kingdom. In the next page he adds, *the devil might preserve the body of Xavier for a time odoriferous and incorrupt* [a]. Thus Calvin, in the preface to his *Institutions*, the Lutheran Church-historiographers, the Magdeburgenses, relating miracles in every century, openly impute to Satan what they cannot persuade to have been the effects of human forgery.

If those things are true, which Sulpicius has writ of St. Martin's miracles, without doubt St. Martin was a necromancer. These are their words [b]; which they endeavour to prove, like every sect, by the precarious assumption of the truth of their own doctrines, and of the superstition and idolatry which they unjustly charge on the Church. *True miracles, say they, confirm the gospel; but these destroy it, and confirm idolatry; the worship of reliques and images, and the invocation of Saints, the mass, &c* [c].

Mr Whitaker, and indeed most of the learned Protestants, have owned the sanctity of St. Bernard. *I believe, says he, St. Bernard was truly a Saint* [d]. This Saints miracles, wrought in public, in the greatest cities, in France, Germany, and

[a] Potuit diabolus Xaverii corpus ad tempus servare incorruptum & suaviter olens, p. 354.

[b] Si vera sunt quæ de miraculis beati Martini scribit Sulpitius; beatum Martinum sine dubio fuisse necromanticum. *Cent. v. cap. 10. col. 1393.*

[c] Vera miracula confirmant evangelium; ista autem evertunt evangelium, & confirmant idolatriam, &c. *ibid.* cited by Bellarmine, *de notis Ecclesiæ, lib. iv. cap. xiv. col. 87.*

[d] Bernardum verè fuisse Sanctum existimo. *In prælec. de Ecclesiâ contr. Bellarm. p. 369.*

and Italy, were so conspicuous, that *Osiander*, who does not stick to call the miracles of the fourth century *satanicæ præstigiæ*, magical delusions [e], seems at a stand, how to account for them. *I believe*, concludes this Reformer, *they were partly wrought by God's permission and by the operation of Satan: not that I think Saint Bernard was a magician; but for that, it is very likely, such miracles were Satan's workmanship... for the confirmation of idolatry and false worship* [f].

Such in all ages has been the language of Heathens, Gentils, and Heretics, who, unable to deny the facts, that clashed with their several systems of religious worship, contented themselves with cavilling at their causes. Thus, as *Theodoret* relates, the Heathen magician answered *Julian*; *Sozomen* and *Arnobius* write, that the Gentiles imputed the flight of *Satan* at the sign of the cross, not to weakness, but to the intent of expressing his horror of that sign; *St. Ambrose* says of the *Arians*, that they pretended the exclamations

[e] The devil's flight at *Julian's* signing himself with the cross, and the devil's answer concerning *St. Babylas*, he says, was Satan's contrivance, *by feigning a flight, to confirm the people's superstition; and to the end, he might, by degrees, bring into the Church the idolatrous worship of reliques.* *Diaboli simulatâ suâ fugâ voluerunt vulgi superstitionem confirmare, &c. Cent. iv. p. 326. Responsum haud dubiè à Satanâ ideo datum, ut paulatim cultum idolatricum reliquiarum in Ecclesiam inveheret. Ibid. col. 1446.*

[f] Partim permissione Dei præstigiis satanicis effecta existimo: non quod sanctum Bernardum magum fuisse putem; sed quod verisimile sit, Satanam talia miracula effecisse... ad confirmationem idolatriæ & falsorum cultuum. *Epit. Centur. p. 310.*

tions of the devils before the bodies of the Saints Gervase and Protase, "You are come to destroy us," were purposely feigned by a collusion of those evil spirits; the Heathens, the impious Eunomius and Porphyrius pretended, that these outcries and torments of the devils were not real, but feigned by them, to delude the Christians, as St. Jerome testifies, and compares the heretic Vigilantius to them [g]. And lastly, the Pharisees dared to affirm, with respect to the miracles of Christ himself, that he did not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils [b].

XVII. To impute miracles to magic, says a modern celebrated Protestant [i], (which was the resource of the Heathens and Jews against the notoriety of the miracles performed by Christ and his disciples) is by no means agreeable to the notions of those who in this age disbelieve Christianity. It will therefore be needless to shew the weakness of that supposition: But that supposition itself is no inconsiderable argument of the truth of the facts. NEXT TO THE APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS, the strongest witnesses of the undeniable force of that truth are CELSUS and JULIAN, and other ancient opponents of the Christian religion, who were obliged to solve what they could not contradict, by such an irrational and absurd imagination.

XVIII.

[g] In morem gentilium impiorumque Porphyrii & Eunomii has præstigias dæmonum esse confingas, & non verè clamare dæmones, sed sua simulare tormenta. *Cont. Vigilant. c. iv.*

[b] Matth. xii. 24.

[i] The author of the observations on the conversion, &c. of St. Paul, p. 101.

XVIII. However *irrational* and *absurd* it may appear to this author, and inconsistent both in itself and with Christianity, so to confound the *miracles* of *Christ* and his *Apostles* with the *illusions* of *Satan* and his *emissaries*, that neither the authors concerned in these systems, much less a *Jew* or *Infidel* can distinguish *truth* from *illusion*; yet we have in the preceding article seen the ablest Protestants forced to make use of this *irrational* and *absurd* expedient, the last refuge of these several systems, and of these structures built upon a false foundation, better to say, a groundless and impious supposition, that the Church of *Christ* is *antichristian*. And they seem to reason in this manner: It is a revealed truth, *that Antichrist, whose coming is after the working of Satan, will work false miracles, for he comes with all power, and signs, and lying wonders [k].* This, they presume, gives them hold to rob the Church of the glory of her miracles, by representing *them* as the *works* of *Satan*, wrought by *magic*, and as *diabolical prestigia*, or *enchantments*. By this management the Church of *Christ* becomes the *Congregation* of *Antichrist*, her *miracles* the works of the devil; the Church is made No-church, her *miracles* an imposition of *Satan* upon mankind. And hence it follows by a necessary consequence, that all Heathen nations *converted* to the Christian religion, either immediately after the death of the Apostles, or after any other of their respective periods, must have been *converted* by the *power* of *Satan*, by *his signs* and *lying wonders*: And, that *miracles*, which are the *same* with *those* of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, not to be distinguished from

[k] 2 Thessal. ii. 8, 9.

from them by any difference, must have been an equivocal mark of truth or falshood, of diabolical apostasy or Christian revelation. Such are the desperate *extremes* to which *learned Protestants* have been driven; to own this last and fatal consequence for a truth.

XIX. This they own not only in contradiction to most other learned Protestants, who allow, that true miracles can only be wrought by the power of God [1], but they must own it in contradiction to themselves. Among the rest, Mr. *Whitaker* had acknowledged this truth: *I answer*, says he, *that I am not in the least ignorant, that true miracles can be done by no power, but the divine [m], which to ascribe to Satan, or Antichrist, were to acknowledge them for God. Nevertheless, in the very next page, maintaining that true miracles are not of force to demonstrate true doctrine, he gives this reason for it: Because*, says he, *true miracles may be wrought by false teachers and false prophets; although, not by their own power, but by that of God, . . . it being certain, that God does*
not

[1] Ursinus in commentar. cateches. p. 21. Zanchius in D. Pauli epist. ad Philipp. Coloss. & Thessal. p. 241, 242. Danaeus in Isag. Christ. part. iv. 46, 47. Piscator in Annal. epist. Paul. p. 470. *Beza* and the Divines of *Geneva* in their propositions disputed in that university. p. 28. n. 12. &c. &c.

[m] Respondeo me minime ignorare; vera miracula, nullâ vi nisi divinâ fieri posse. *De Eccles.* p. 348. Nam possunt vera miracula etiam à falsis doctoribus & pseudo-prophetis fieri; sed tamen Dei, non illorum virtute constat enim Deum non modo veris, sed & falsis doctoribus, vim tribuere hujusmodi faciendi miracula, non tamen quò confirmat illorum falsa dogmata, sed quò tentet eos ad quos mittuntur.

not only give power to work such miracles to the teachers of truth, but to the teachers of error; not, indeed, to confirm their false doctrines, but in order to tempt those to whom they are sent. "The same [n] is asserted by *Daneus*, in his answer to *Bellar-* mine, says my author [o]. In colour of which paradox he forbeareth not to misapply the Scriptures, inferring thereupon that no sufficient testimony can be taken, or certain argument collected, for true doctrine, from neither kind of miracles, true or false: directly against the Scriptures themselves, which affirm of true miracles, that they do confirm and witness the truth, terming them therefore signs and testimonies thereof." *I have greater testimony or witness, says Christ, than that of John: for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me.*

XX. It is certain, that there is no power but what proceeds from God, and when he permits that power to be exerted by evil agents, it is for ends infinitely wise and good. God, as *Dr. Clark* asserts, cannot work miracles to deceive men himself, nor permit evil spirits to work miracles to impose upon men, when the error would be invincible, which would be the very same thing as if he worked them himself [p]. To prevent invincible error, divine miracles have such distinctive characters of truth, so adapted to the capacity of all mankind, that the miracles of *Satan* can never be a sufficient ground for invincible error. These latter are stiled in

[n] *Brerley's* Protest. Apology, p. 551.

[o] Respons. ad Bellarm. disput. part. i. p. 784.

[p] Evidence of natural and revealed religion, p. 228.

in the scripture-language, *lying wonders*; the coming of the workers of them, is also said to be *with all deceit*, according to the working of Satan [q], who was a murderer from the beginning, . . . a liar, and the father of lies, who abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him [r]. This then being the language of divine truth, no Christian Divine should decline from it, into the covert of metaphysics, or empty verbal contests. Yet we find this same Doctor, who had uttered several truths on this subject with much precision, declaring, that if the devil has any natural power, even so much as the meanest of men, and be not restrained by God from exerting that power, it is evident, he will be able, by reason of his invisibility, to work TRUE and real miracles [s].

To affect the organs of sense, so as to make things appear what they are not, is to all intents and purposes as TRUE a miracle, and as great a one, as making real changes in the things themselves [t].

What degrees of power God may reasonably be supposed to have communicated . . . to GOOD or EVIL angels, is by no means POSSIBLE for us to determine [u].

There is no instance of any miracle in Scripture, with respect to which, an ordinary spectator would be certain, that the miraculous effect was beyond the power of all created beings in the universe to produce [x].

It can never be proved, that all subordinate intelligent beings are under such a law or restraint, whereby they be hindered from ever interposing . . .

to

[q] 2 Thessal. ii. 9, 10. [r] John viii. 44.

[s] Evidence of natural and revealed religion, p. 225.

[t] Ibid. p. 226. [u] Ib. 220. [x] Ib. 221.

to produce any of those effects which we call miraculous universally, perpetually and without exception : and without this a spectator that sees a miracle, can NEVER be certain that it was not done by some created Intelligence [y].

The possibility and the good tendency, or at least the indifferency of the doctrine are a necessary condition, or circumstance, without which the doctrine is not capable of being proved by miracle ; and which is always necessary to be first supposed, that the doctrine may be capable of being proved by miracle [z]. But is it possible, that a divine miracle wrought on purpose to make a doctrine credited by common sense and reason, should want any circumstance, or conviction, to make it credited ? If so, the Omnipotent bath not wrought, cannot work a miracle, immediately, absolutely credible of itself ; and his Omnipotency ceases.

XXI. It is easy to observe from what has been said, how distant the first Reformers doctrines were from those of their successors, and how contradictory to each other. How the first error, in forsaking the Catholic Church, engages in farther errors, not those only of common abilities, but of the greatest wit and learning amongst them. For the more penetrating they are, the farther by consequence they must stray from truth, after having once turned their backs to it, and so the least inconsistent amongst them will become the greatest Infidel. A series of miracles in the church of Christ, the evidence of Christianity, a greater testimony than that of John himself a Prophet, and greater than a Prophet, and the object of prophecy, could not even be impugned by a Whitaker, a
Clark ;

[y] Ib. 2.

[z] Ib. 23.

Clark; nor have they found it possible to defend scripture-miracles wrought by the finger of God in proof of the old and new Testament doctrines, but upon such principles, as force them to allow a power equally great, and miracles equally true to the Devil himself.

XXI. *The only possible ways*, says the latter, by which a Spectator may certainly and infallibly distinguish miracles worked by God for the truth of any doctrine, from the frauds of evil spirits.---- *the only possible ways*, he repeats it, [a] are reduced by him to the above qualities, conditions or circumstances, possibility, good tendency, indifference, [b] whereof the Spectator must be convinced, or be a judge, accordingly to admit or reject the miracle. Now, if upon examination it appear that this *criterion* is not the only one sufficient to discern true miracles; but the only *criterion*, which sectaries can adopt, and which in effect they employ to reject *primitive* and *Gospel-miracles*, it is very plain that it cannot be a precise and adequate *criterion*, as has been already evinced, [c].

XXIII. But, as the *truth of miracles conveyed by undoubted testimony* has given such evidence to the true Church, as to force these learned Protestants to a shift now generally exploded; viz. *to allow true miracles wrought by Satan*; the absurdity of this concession and the necessity of admitting the true church, which was pointed out by true miracles, appeared so glaring to as great a Genius and Scholar, as any of his predecessors Dr. Middleton at the head of too numerous a party of open
and

[a] Dr. Clark ib. p. 226. and marg.

[b] Ib. p. 230.

[c] See Chap. i. § 3. Chap. iii. § 3.

and concealed champions of Deism, many of them persons of great wit and learning; that he fairly renounces all *credibility* of *miracles* upon *human testimony*, and openly professes he knows no *miracles*, no revealed *truths*, nought which the *wit of man* can possibly discover of the *WAYS* or *WILL* of the Creator - - - - but by attending to the *revelation*, which he made of himself from the beginning in the wonderful works and beautiful fabric of this visible world. [d]

XXIV. After the Dr. has refused all credit to Christian miracles resting upon human testimony, it can be no wonder, he should deny the same to the works of the Devil, and account the *belief that Evil Spirits or Evil men can work real miracles in defiance and opposition to the authority of the Gospel*, not only a *proof of the grossest credulity*, but of that *peculiar species of it*, which of all others, lays a man the most open to the *delusive arts of impostors*. . . . their very piety will oblige them to admit as *miraculous*, whatever is pretended to be wrought in defence of it, and so make them of course the *implicit dupes of their own wonder-workers*.

XXV. Among these *wonders* and *wonder-workers* Mr. Brooke the great adversary of the Doctor justly claims a place. Tho' his zeal goes so far, and his Faith has reached such a pitch, that he believes the writings and miracles of the *primitive Fathers* to be worthy of all kind of faith [e] equally with the *Gospel* and *Gospel-miracles*; yet he supplely chimes in with the Doctor and joins with him to condemn a *Clark*, *Whiston*, *Jurieu*, *Joseph Mede*, *Whitaker*, his admired *Centurists of Magdeburg*

[d] Præf. to the Free Inq. p. xxii.

[e] See Chap. ii. § xii. and xiv.

deburg, the numerous tribe of their commentators on the *Revelation*, all Protestants and earnest sticklers for the *miraculous anticristianism* of the church of *Rome*, tho' indeed most of them arrant *Visionaries*, false Prophets themselves or believers of such; and peremptorily defines the *utter incredibility* of *Dæmoniacal præstigiæ*, a point, he says, *which no human testimony can support, and which never had any existence, but in the great weakness, credulity and superstition [f] of men.* But what are the grounds of this positive decision? Truly, the authority of a *Wierus*, whom we must believe *an able and learned man*, and *Reginald Scot*, *perhaps not so learned, yet of as large a share of Sense*, both, he owns, *condemned for maintaining damnable opinions.* He goes still further and decides thus in opposition not only to the authentic testimony and unanimous consent of all nations whatever, as *Dr. Middleton* has assured him [g]; but to complete his argument and to confute himself, in opposition to the divine testimony of the Scriptures, and to himself.

XXVI. How opposite his assertion is to Scripture may be shewn in many instances, for which *Dr. Middleton* is rebuked by another Protestant divine, his adversary also, but no timid, nor cringing one: *once more*, says he reflecting upon the above passage in the Doctor, *you have spoke out: you have shewn without disguise what you think of St. Paul [b] and the lying miracles, which (be poor man!)*

[f] See Gal. v. 19. 20. Rev. xxii. 15. 1. Cor. x. 20. 21. Sam. xxviii. 13, 14. 2. Thess. xi. 9. Rev. xiii. 13. 14.

[g] Free Inq. p. 221.

[b] 2. Thess. xi. 9.

man !) believed evil spirits or evil men could work in opposition to the Gospel; and of St. John [i] talking so idly of him, who doeth great wonders and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth (even though they were not Christians) by means of these miracles, which he hath power to do [k]. Nor is Mr. Brooke less inconsistent with himself, where he undertakes to clear the Fathers from the imputation of *superstition and credulity* in their belief of miracles wrought by evil men, when both, according to him, may be equally imputed to them for their belief of extraordinary things done by the power of the Devil : Or let Mr. Brooke shew the difference between the effects of Sorcery by the magicians of Egypt under Pharao, or by a Simon, in the Acts of the Apostles [l], and the Dæmoniacal *Præstigia* which he denies. But how does he answer with regard to the *first*, having precluded himself from a possibility of defending the Fathers, as to the *second*. He answers, that the Fathers owning true miracles wrought by wicked men is no more than the Scriptures of both the old and new Testament will justify ; but then he unluckily confounds these true miracles wrought in *the name of the Lord* [m] in confirmation of truth and for good ends with false miracles [n] wrought in the name of false Gods, in confirmation, not of truth, but idolatrous worship by false prophets or false Christs, for ends manifestly evil ; *to deceive if it were possible the very elect* ; pretended miracles, which are unanimously

[i] Rev. xiii. 13, 14.

[k] Letter to Dr. Middleton, occasioned by his late Free Inq. p. 109.

[l] Acts viii. 9.

[m] Mat. vii. 22.

[n] Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

nimously ascribed by the Fathers to an evil cause of a superiour nature *i. e.* to Satan working by himself or by means of wicked men. And by confounding thus *true* with *false* miracles, he admits, what both he and Dr. Middleton had denied, the Demoniacal *Præstigia* or delusions of the Devil. What must be the consequence of this inconsistency? What, in contradiction to himself, he affirms cannot be attributed to evil spirits, must be imputed to God. To what other purpose is *Moses* introduced OPINING (he does not say, *divinely inspired*) and that well known passage of Deuteronomy [o] unless it be to prove, that the endeavours of a wicked man to seduce the people of God upon the credit of a *former prophecy* made by him under divine inspiration, or to impose upon them by some diabolical illusion, are not only suffered by a permissive providence, but are the direct work of God *divided against himself* [p] with an intent to deceive? Rather therefore, than go against the torrent of fashionable infidelity, and admit in evil spirits a power within the compass of their natural agency, to cause some wonderful effects, and to impose upon men, what a series of blasphemies must he adopt upon a principle so contrary to reason and religion; a Principle by which

[o] Deuter. ch. xiii. v. 1, 2, 3. *If there arise among you a Prophet, or a dreamer of dreams and giveth thee a sign or a wonder. 2. And the sign or the wonder come so pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them. 3. Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams, &c.*

[p] Mat. xii. 25, 26.

which God is made the author, the *efficient* and *moral* cause of Sin [q] and of the most powerful seduction, and becomes a God of whom the sober *Deist* may be ashamed, and whom the *Atheist* would have reason to deny [r] ?

XXVII. To ascribe falshood and deceit to God, and to believe him an all-perfect Being is the height of contradiction as well as impiety, but is the necessary consequence of denying with Dr. *Middleton* and Mr. *Brooke* the *Demoniacal prestigia* or illusions of the Devil, or his extraordinary, tho' natural works. The writers for the church have often objected this dangerous tendency of the principles of the Reformation. Tho' the reformers could not answer the difficulty, yet in the beginning they kept within some bounds. Whether they apprehended, that they should give offence to *Profelytes*, who could not so readily wear off the impressions made upon them by the old religion, in which they were brought up, or whether they themselves could not master the conviction they had with respect to several articles, the Reformation at first was more modest. But in process of time, *Corruption* having made very advanced Steps and gained ground every where, modern Protestants, distinguished by great talents and erudition have, without fear, examined coolly the

[q] Let no man say, when he is tempted (by God's permission) I am tempted of God: for God is not a tempter of evils: and he tempteth no man. James i. 3.

[r] Compare this which *Wickliff's* blasphemous doctrine extracted from his Trialogue by the Bishop of *Meaux's* History of the Variations l. xi. §. cliii.

the foundations of Protestantism, common, indeed, to all pretended Reformations, and have found them utterly inconsistent, and impossible to be defended, if credit was to be given to human testimony, to history, to the Fathers, and to tradition. What should have been done in this case? Reason and Religion must have allowed authority to take place; that authority, upon which the holy scriptures were received, ought to have been respected; but on the contrary a *Middleton* and many adherents, sham-defenders of Protestantism; and, tho', 'tis hoped, undesignedly, secret enemies of Christianity have dared to speak out, and being kept in countenance by the dissoluteness of the age, the reigning liberty of *thinking*, rather, *blaspheming*, have rejected all authority, that was contrary to Protestantism; whereas they should have seriously considered with themselves, whether Protestantism should not have been rejected, as contrary to, and inconsistent with so great authority. The opposers of the Dr. among the Protestants are engaged in the same fatal consequences; and the same authority, upon which they admit miracles within a certain period, continues in full force after their respective periods, and obliges them to admit the same contradictions, the necessary result of their jarring and self-contradicting systems. Thus a gate has been opened to a deluge of *immorality*, *infidelity*, and *Deism*, which it is to be feared, in a short time will destroy the slender remains of *Christianity* in this *Island*. And it may not be foreign to this subject to observe, that *moral corruption*, a natural effect of this attempt against Revelation has been greatly promoted by the late *Tolands*, *Tindals*, and the *works* of a noble author, who undertook the patronage

tronage of Infidelity against God and Religion; and, which any Christian must own with grief, has prevailed with too many, and infatuated them with *impious* Tenets. But in this the Protestant clergy and some of the Laity have lent each other a hand. The first have laid down the *Principles*; the latter have made the *Inference*: The first seem to have a regard to Religion, who may be supposed to overlook the consequence; the latter are better *Logicians*, without any pretence to christianity.

XXVIII. This digression on a matter of such importance, which will not appear altogether foreign to our subject, as it concerns the *whole of Christianity* attacked by destroying the truth of miracles, will plead some excuse with the indulgent reader. And now to return to the subject in hand, this grand contradiction, that God is *infinitely perfect* and *capable of deceit and falsehood*, evidently deduced from these systems, demonstrates the erroneousness of their principles, and farther shews, that no rule of truth has guided them in their inquiries; that no truth was aimed at; but, that the *consistency* and *connexion* of their systems was the only point in view. But here they have missed their aim; and by confounding *true* with *false* [s] miracles, *truth* with *falsehood*, *reality* with *forgery*,

[s] In the year 381, says Mr. *Whiston*, the *demoniacal*, the *Athanasian* and *Popish diabolical* miracles, or wonders began. It were to be wished, that Mr. *Whiston* had told us what the difference is to a Spectator betwixt a *Demoniacal* wonder, and a *true* miracle; and by what mark one might have distinguished an *antichristian* from a *true* miracle. But here WE ARE LEFT IN THE DARK.
Pres. to the previous Questions.

forgery, have left Protestantism destitute of any single mark or *criterion*, which may not be equally claimed by any Sect to discern *true miracles*, as they call them, and which they have empowered *Satan* to work, from the only TRUE, wrought IN THE NAME of the ONE GOD, creator of the universe. But as one contradiction draws on many more, one of their Doctors, and a principal combatant in this controversy has frankly confessed, *that, fix upon the Hypothesis of which of these learned Gentlemen you will, who have been unanimous in opposition to Dr. Middleton, you are sure to have four or five against the Scheme you pitch upon.* [1]

CHAP. IV.

I. **H**ITHERTO variety of error has appeared in these systems with little truth, and many contradictions [u] the necessary consequences from the contests of sects concerning miracles. It is not the nature, nor the interest of error, to throw light, but clouds and obscurity on every truth which it opposes. Reason assisted by the light of faith may discover truth amidst the contradictions and perplexities in which error has involved it. It is equally the interest of reason and of faith to discover it, and of truth itself, whose interest is as opposite to that of error, as it's nature; that dwelling in light, which is it's essence, this having no other shelter nor being, but in darkness.

II.

[1] Ibidem.

[u] See from art. vii. of the preceding chapter to the end of it.

II. It would have afforded light to their controversy, had these authors previously agreed, what it is they mean by miracle. But I do not remember that either *Middleton*, or his adversaries have given a definition of it, any more than they have given a Scripture-ground for any of their systems. *Whitaker* indeed has confessed, *that true miracles can be wrought by no other power but that of God* [x]. For what power but that of the author of nature and of its laws, can reverse those laws? A miracle then, strictly speaking, and in the rigour of truth, is an effect impossible to be produced by any but the divine power: Vulgarly speaking, and in a greater latitude, it is an effect produced out of the course of those laws of nature, which are *known to man* [y]. The first only are *true* miracles, of which the Psalmist speaks in the rigour of truth, when he says, *Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who ALONE doth wonderful things* [z]. The second may be prodigies or wonders, but not miracles, for *false Christs and false prophets also shall do great signs and wonders* [a]. A rule then, or criterion, by which one may clearly discern, when a singular event not contained in the chain or connexion of natural causes and their effects *known to man*, is to be ascribed to God; when to another cause, is the rule sought after.

III. *Every sect has challenged miracles*, and opposed the miracles of other sects, no less than the church's

[x] art. xix.

[y] Portentum ergo fit: contra quam est nota natura. August. lib. xxi. de Civ. Dei. c. viii.

[z] Ps. lxxi. 18.

[a] Mat. xxiv. 24.

church's miracles. *There is not a single Historian of antiquity, says Dr. Middleton, who has not recorded oracles, prodigies, prophecies and miracles. Many of these are attested in the gravest manner and by the gravest writers, and were firmly believed at the time by the populace. This, he tells us, may hurt in some measure the general credit of miracles [b]. There is hardly a single fact, says the same author, which I have charged upon the primitive times, but what we still see performed in one or other of the sects of Christians, of our own times... diseases cured; devils cast out, and all the other miracles which are said to have been wrought in the primitive church—pretended revelations, prophetic visions and divine impressions [c].---Let our declaimers then on the authority of the Fathers and the faith of History, produce, if they can, any evidence of the primitive miracles, half so strong, as what is alledged for the miracles of the Abbé de Paris: or if they can not do it, let them give us a reason, why we must receive the one, and reject the other: or if they fail likewise in this, let them be so ingenuous at last as to confess, that we have no other part left, but either to admit them all, or reject them all [d].* He chuses to reject them all immediately after the Apostles death, and his protestant adversaries date the cessation of *all*, not long after. Let us examine, this conclusion from these premises, whether it is not both absurd and becoming only an Infidel.

IV. It is certain, that in the Jewish, as well as the Christian church, and in all ages, there were a number of false miracles and false prophecies opposed

[b] Free Inq. p. 218.

[c] Ibid. p. 230.

[d] Ibid. p. 226.

opposed against the true, whether by Jewish or Christian sectarists out of the external communion of the church, or by Jews and Christians in the external communion of it, which must be ascribed to *imposture* of some kind or other, or as the Doctor expresses it in the case of human imposture, *to the artifices of a few, playing upon the credulity, the superstition, and the enthusiasm of the many, for the sake of some private interest.* It is no less certain, that to confound the miracles and prophecies of these impostors, either sectarists and enemies to the church, or false and pretended, or ignorant and deluded *Jews and Christians*, with the *examined*, and the *approved* miracles of the church either *Jewish or Christian*, and then to conclude for rejecting *all* or receiving *all*, would be a conclusion, only becoming an infidel, and which would extend to the gospel of *Christ*; and to *Christ* himself; because there were many false *Acts*, false *Gospels* and false *Christs*. And indeed as the conclusion, so the objection can only be made by an infidel, and bears date from the earliest ages of christianity; so that there is scarce any to be found more ancient [*e*]: and being grounded on the impious comparison betwixt the divine oracles of Judaism and Christianity, with those of Paganism, from the pretended impossibility of discerning amidst the variety of religions, contradictory to each other, and their several sects, *Heathen, Jewish, Christian*, all claiming prophecy and miracles: which hath the justest, or any just claim to them, it concludes *all*, are to be admitted, or *all* rejected.

V.

[*e*] Origen. cont. Celsum. l. 3, 4.

V. These professors of christianity must allow on both sides with regard to *primitive* and *scripture-miracles*, that an *Infidel* only can draw this conclusion. Whether a declared *Infidel* or a concealed *Unbeliever* conclude in this manner against miracles, one cannot mistake the plain marks of *Infidelity* grounded on such heads [f] as we have already mentioned, upon the strength of which, modern systems have rejected all the church-miracles of the succeeding ages. The stale argument is borrowed from old systems upon the *anti-scriptural supposition* of the *Apostasy* of the church, which justifies and emboldens declared *Infidels* [g] in rejecting *all* the scripture-miracles and prophecies. If these last fail with regard to their chief objects *Christ* and his church by so early an *Apostasy* of his church from truth, which *Prophecy* had for ever secured to *her*; if the failing of these *promises* be equally possible and credible; what must, what can the *Infidel* conclude of all the other *Scripture-prophecies* and their *author*? What else can he conclude against the *divine oracles*, but what the *Roman* orator concluded against the *Heathen oracles*, that they were *partim falsa, partim casu vera*. Cic. de Divin. l. i. 56.

VI. But this conclusion is not only the reasoning of an infidel, but is moreover very absurd. Was it to take place universally with regard to every thing that artifice, fiction and imposture have aimed to counterfeit, *playing on the credulity, the superstition, the enthusiasm of the many, for the sake of some private interest*; we must fairly conclude
either

[f] Chap. i. art. viii. and seq.

[g] See chap. xi. art. xi.

either to admit *all* imposture, or to reject *all* truth. For what *truth* is there that *artifice* and *fraud* have not endeavoured to counterfeit; and what but *truth* has given ground for such an attempt? Reason unassisted by faith shews things in a very different light, and from the number of *false miracles* and *all religions* pretending to *miracles* infers the truth and certainty of some. Whence, but from the light of nature, can proceed this universal consent of mankind, that *miracles* are a necessary foundation and a distinctive character of *true religion*? Whence the motive to counterfeit what cannot be *real*, as not only void of all *existence*, but of all possibility to *exist*? *Empiricks* indeed have played upon the credulity of men by their pretence to *nostrum's* or specific remedies the infallible cure of various disorders. Men flock to them and trust their lives in their hands. Let such a one pretend to make men immortal; who even of the vulgar will listen to him? And why? But that the *first* pretence has a foundation in truth from the experience of mankind, that true remedies and relief is sometimes to be had from them; that *Empiricks* have sometimes made good their promises; but no such foundation being found for the *latter*, imposture could not aim, nor has ever aimed to build upon it.

VII. It may then be lawful to infer, that a *conclusion*, by which *historical faith* and credit is refused to all *that is marvellous*, is inconsistent with *christianity* and *revelation*. It must shock *reason* and *common sense*, *which*, with *the light of nature only*, convinces us of the *existence* of an Almighty Being, capable of revealing himself by miracles; and *which*, from the concurrent sense of all mankind, receives a farther, but most efficacious proof, that he has revealed himself in this manner; and that

that such *revelations* and *facts*, as were *seen* and *heard*, and were the objects of sense, might be conveyed by *History* or *Tradition*, so as to deserve credit and belief. In a word, this *conclusion* can only be consistent with *Atbeism*, or a *Spinoza*, who denies the possibility of a *miracle* from this *mighty principle*, that, if a power was admitted in God to alter, or suspend the laws of nature, his *will* would be fickle and changeable. But what is this but mere words to delude his reader? For what relation can the term *will* have to matter and motion, the only Divinities allowed by this Infidel? The objection itself (it is what common sense replies) has no sense in it. For it amounts to no more than this, that God's will is changeable, because it produces different effects, than which what can be more absurd? It would indeed be changeable, if, after willing such an effect, he ceased to *will* it. What but stupidity can imagine this in God? He wills eternally all those beings of which the world is composed, together with the effects, which these beings have in the chain, or mutual connexion with one another, whether *known to man*, or not *known to man*, because out of, or besides, the connexion. The effects of his power, independent of the series and order of what is called *second causes*, and the effects of this same power, dependent on them, equally enter into the plan of his sovereign wisdom. They are but the consequences of his first laws combined with his immutable decrees, and whatever diversity may be observed in his works, there is neither variety, nor inconstancy in the will, which produces them [b], He is infinitely

[b] *Opera mutat ; consilia non mutat.*

finitely free, and his will, infinitely fruitful, guides and directs, is not guided and enslaved by the effects of its own fecundity. What man calls the course of nature, or its laws, derive their being from his will, to which, no necessity antecedent to his choice, could either constrain, or subject him. For, if he were subject to *them*, what a deity would human invention fabricate to itself? A deity, whose omniscient providence could not foresee even one of all the events, which happen in this universe, that his omnipotence could prevent. The possibility, then, of miracles, the truth also, that such have existed, being acknowledged by reason, or the light of nature, the question is, how, by the same light, among so many pretences to miracles, truth may be discerned from falshood; for *signs are for infidels*, who have no other light than that of nature to be guided by.

VIII. Not to hazard any thing of my own, on a point of this importance, I shall quote at length a learned author [*i*], who makes it his glory to tread in the steps, and follow the lights, of the greatest authors that have preceded him [*k*]. “ We call that a miracle, says this
“ author, addressing himself to his pupil *Euse-*
“ *bins*, which happens contrary to the laws of
“ nature, which is above these laws, which is
“ not a sequel from them; in a word, an effect
“ superior to the laws of nature. Miracles,
“ there-

[*i*] Preuves de la religion de Jesus Christ, contre les Spinolistes & les Deistes. Par M. L. F. A Paris, rue St. Jacques. M. DCC. LI.

[*k*] Plan de l'ouvrage, p. viii.

“ therefore, are possible, since God is the master
 “ and disposer, as he pleases, of the laws of na-
 “ ture, is not subject to them, can act inde-
 “ pendently of them. If you see the sun stop
 “ on its course, at the word of a weak mortal :
 “ a bowl, that lay still, begin to roll precisely be-
 “ cause you wished it : or abide immoveable
 “ in opposition to all your efforts : my hand
 “ withered recover its motion and strength at
 “ your word only : a stone suspended in the
 “ air, or a man walking on the water, with-
 “ out any visible support ; could you doubt
 “ whether nature hath an author, to whom it
 “ is entirely subject ? If to account to you for
 “ these effects, I employed the great word
 “ *Chance*, what sentiments should I excite in
 “ your soul ? The same undoubtedly that a man
 “ may excite whose brain is turned. Should I
 “ appear more wise, if I told you with *Spinoza*,
 “ that events of this kind should not be
 “ reckoned superior to the laws of nature, be-
 “ cause we know not nature sufficiently to
 “ judge what is above its power ? Although
 “ our knowledge is too limited to know precise-
 “ ly how far the power of natural causes ex-
 “ tends ; evidence, common sense, constant ex-
 “ perience, are sufficient to convince us, that the
 “ powers of natural causes are inadequate to the
 “ production of an effect proceeding from a
 “ cause which has no relation to the effect. A
 “ man speaks divers languages which he had
 “ never learnt, gives you the use of a paralytic
 “ hand by the sole motion of his will, raises
 “ the dead : such effects bespeak a creative
 “ power, and have no connexion with natural
 “ causes.

IX, “ Does

IX. " Does it follow from these established truths, that every effect which is contrary to the laws of nature *known to us*, is a divine miracle, capable of giving such authority to the man that works it, as is requisite to subject our minds to him? No, my *Eusebius*: for it is not impossible, that God should have created spirits, and communicated a power to them over bodies, like to that which the soul has over that portion of matter to which it is united, either to try us, to punish us, or to benefit and perfect us. As our reason gives no information concerning the existence of these spirits, nor the extent or limits of their power; it is possible that bodies may be moved by these spirits contrary to the laws *known to us*. We cannot, therefore, judge by the simple view of an effect superior to the laws of nature *known to us*, whether or no God be the immediate author of the effect. We stand then in need of a rule, by which we may discern when it is that God acts by himself contrary to the laws of nature; when we ought to look on an effect superior to these laws, as a divine evidence, a miracle, which proves a divine authority in him who works it. Observe, I beseech you, that this rule is to be derived from a source of reason, and that it must serve us till God himself bestows another [1].

X. " A miracle wrought in the name of God, Creator of heaven and earth, cannot be wrought to authorise a lie. This is the rule, which

[1] See Chapter VIII. §. xiv. A .booklib.

“ which appears to me so clearly grounded on
 “ the idea of God, that I fear the endeavour to
 “ illustrate it by reasoning, would obscure it.
 “ If we conceive any thing distinctly, it is af-
 “ furedly that God is the supreme truth, which
 “ cannot deceive us : this, nevertheless, would
 “ happen, if a miracle wrought in his name au-
 “ thorised a lie : A miracle forces our consent,
 “ unless we have invincible reasons to oppose
 “ against it : now it is impossible to oppose any
 “ thing against a miracle wrought in the name
 “ of God. All that we could suppose, would
 “ be, that God acts occasionally and conform-
 “ ably to the desires of a seducing spirit. An
 “ absurd supposition. God is goodness itself ;
 “ he cannot lend his name to the enemy of man,
 “ on purpose to delude him. God is holiness it-
 “ self ; he cannot, therefore, display his power
 “ to render his name the witness of a lie. God
 “ is wisdom itself ; he cannot, therefore, deprive
 “ himself of the most apt external means of im-
 “ mediately and on the spot convincing an up-
 “ right and reasonable man, and making him
 “ discern truth from falshood. For all miracles
 “ would be necessarily equivocal, useless, inca-
 “ pable of determining ; if a miracle wrought
 “ in the name of the true God might serve to
 “ prove a lie.

XI. “ Do not object here, that God may
 “ tempt and try us. To tempt, and induce
 “ into error, are two quite different things. To
 “ tempt, is to present, or not to remove, the
 “ occasions, which solicit, without necessitating.
 “ To induce into error, is to drag, and to prepare
 “ an infallible and necessary determination to
 “ falshood. A miracle wanting this character,
 “ of

“ of being wrought in the name of God, is
 “ but a temptation. We have resources against
 “ the illusion; it is our own fault if we give
 “ into it; for such a miracle proves, indeed,
 “ that there is a God; but it does not prove,
 “ that God acts by himself; that it is not a be-
 “ ing distinct from him, although dependent
 “ on his power. We are then free to with-
 “ hold our assent, and not acquiesce to it. We
 “ can, and ought to compare, what is pro-
 “ posed to our belief, with the truths certain
 “ and grounded on the ideas of the divinity,
 “ and the order which we bear within ourselves.
 “ But we are without resource against the illu-
 “ sion, if the miracle be wrought in the name
 “ of God to authorise a lie. It is evident, that
 “ the prodigy and the will of man, who works
 “ it by only invoking the sacred name of God,
 “ have the same author. Thus are we assured,
 “ that a miracle wrought in the name of God
 “ the Creator, is an evident proof of the truth;
 “ because we are assured that God, a being in-
 “ finitely good, infinitely true, infinitely holy,
 “ infinitely wise, necessarily loves the truth;
 “ that he is incompatible with the love of a
 “ lie; that he cannot act but from the love
 “ of truth; that he cannot employ his power
 “ against himself, against his veracity, his ho-
 “ linefs, his wisdom; that he cannot be the
 “ author of our fall, in laying for us inevitable
 “ snares, in putting us under the indispensable
 “ obligation of crediting imposture, or of abu-
 “ sing our reason: as it would necessarily hap-
 “ pen, if a clear and evident miracle wrought
 “ in the name of God authorised a lie. For in
 “ this

“ this case, either we should believe or not be-
 “ lieve. If we believe, our fall is visible. If
 “ we do not believe, we resist evidence, even
 “ God himself; since it is impossible for us to
 “ doubt of his working the miracle, we are the
 “ witnesses of, to confirm the truth which he
 “ declares to us himself, or causes another to
 “ declare.

XII. “ There are but two ways to take, in
 “ order to elude a principle so evident. The
 “ first would be to deny, that God is a good,
 “ true, holy and wise being. But this would
 “ be falling into *Atbeism*, this would be deny-
 “ ing the existence of a being sovereignly
 “ perfect. The second way would be, in ad-
 “ mitting these perfections in God, to maintain
 “ that they are in him of a superior order,
 “ quite different from the ideas, which we an-
 “ nex to the terms of *goodness*, of *veracity*, of
 “ *sanctity*, of *wisdom*. But this is saying, that
 “ these terms, when we apply them to God,
 “ signify nothing, that they are words only,
 “ which we join no ideas to, or, at least, words,
 “ to which we join none but false notions, or
 “ ideas. The same must be said of all the
 “ rest of the divine perfections, none of which
 “ can we conceive more clearly than these first.
 “ Therefore, when we speak of God, we have
 “ no notion of what we say: We utter terms
 “ only which are void of sense; and affirm
 “ what we are ignorant of. We affirm, that
 “ a being exists infinitely perfect, only because
 “ we know not, whether it does exist. Is not
 “ this falling again into pure *Atbeism*? Here
 “ are then two incontestable principles, de-
 “ duced

“duced from the light of nature, by which
 “we are to judge of miracles. They must,
 “first, be divine and true, be superior to the
 “laws of nature *known to us*. Secondly, they
 “must be wrought *in the name* of God, Creator
 “of heaven and earth.”

XIII. Let us apply these principles, so evident from the light of nature, to Heathen oracles and prodigies, to those of *Jewish* and *Christian* sects, to the approved miracles of the Church in all times, and see, whether even Deistical reason, can, with any consistency, conclude, that we are to *admit them all*, or *reject them all*. And, *first*, As to Heathen oracles and prodigies: Were these uttered and wrought in the name of the *One*, infinitely *good, true, holy, wise* Creator of heaven and earth? This is the first principle, and contains a rule so conformable to reason, that it is adopted by *Origen*, in his disputation against *Celsus*. So far from this, that they were uttered and wrought in the names of a multitude of gods, and the belief of *Polytheism*, that monstrous error, was always presupposed as their foundation, and the main scope of them was the confirmation and farther establishment of this belief. But to Deistical reason, to all pure reason, every system that is not grounded on, or dissents from, the unity of God, is a false and impious system, necessarily proceeding from an ignorant and seducing genius. But this was the case of all the Heathen oracles, without any variety or contradiction on this point. Whether they were then ascribed to human, or diabolical imposture, or partly to one and partly to the other, which

is the truest way of accounting for them, they are equally impertinent to the purpose for which they are alledged, either to invalidate the truth of human testimony, or to bear the least comparison betwixt them and the prophecies and miracles of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church.

XIV. That both kinds of imposture intervened, is manifest from innumerable proofs alledged by ancient and modern authors on this subject. A brief extract from them will suffice for my purpose, and, first, with regard to human imposture: What were the sentiments of the philosophers concerning these oracles, even when they were in the greatest repute, is well known. All their schools, that of the *Stoics* excepted [*m*], next to their gods themselves, despised their oracles, as is remarked by *Origen* [*n*] against *Celsus*. They were the scoff of the wisdom of both *Greece* and *Rome*. Nothing more ingenious and free, than *Ænomaus's* apostrophes to *Apollo*, and criticisms on his answers, as we find them in *Eusebius* [*o*]. *Cicero* [*p*] speaks of them with little more regard, and *Porphyry* himself,

[*m*] Ea (oracula) non credunt etiam Græcorum philosophorum sectæ, præsertim qui sequuntur Democritum, Epicurum, Aristotelem. *Orig. cont. Cels.* l. viii.

[*n*] Possem de iis (Paganorum miraculis) dicere ex autoritate Aristotelis & Peripateticorum plurima Pythiæ, cæterisque fidem abrogantia. Possem item ex Epicuro, sectatoribusque ejus, transcribere quid de his sentiant; ostendereque quòd ipsi Græci nihil pendant Græciæ oracula vel celebratissima. *Orig. cont. Cels.* lib. vii.

[*o*] *Oenom.* de Falsit. orac. apud *Euseb.* Pr. Evang. lib. v. cap. 10.

[*p*] *Cicero* lib. ii. de Divin.

self, so great a zealot for Heathen worship, could not dissent in the main from those philosophers, who exposed the lies and the vanity of these oracles [q]. They were characterised with every mark of imposture that could appertain to them as such; with conscious distrust lest the delusion should be discovered, ambiguity, contradiction, abomination of the rites and sacrifices required by those oracles, to appease the wrath, or conciliate the favour of their deities.

XV. The fear of their being discovered, was the cause, that their priests never admitted either a Christian, or a philosopher of *Epicurus's* sect, to be present at their answers. The last neither believed their gods nor oracles, and the first defied *Apollo* to speak in their presence; nor durst the ministers of the dumb idol accept the challenge [r]. Their credit was supported by the ignorance of the simple, and the policy of princes, sure of the approbation of the multitude, when the deity was gained to side with them. The amphibology, or double sense of the oracle, secures the credit of the deity, and *Cræsus*, king of *Lydia*, on the assurance
that

[q] *Porphy.* apud *Euseb.* Pr. Evang. lib. v. c. 5.

[r] *Tertul. Apol. Lucian. Pseud. Chrys.* adversus Gentes, tom. i.

[s], *Demosthenes* quidem, qui abhinc annos prope ccc fuit, jam tum φιλιππίου Pythiam dicebat, id est quasi cum *Philippo* facere. Hoc autem eò spectabat, ut eam à *Philippo* corruptam diceret. Quo licet æstimare, in aliis quoque oraculis Delphicis aliquid non sinceri fuisse. *Cic. de Divinat.* lib. ii.

that he should destroy a great kingdom, if he attacked the Persians [t], verifies the oracle when he is conquered, and his own kingdom destroyed by them. The Greeks were conscious of the obliquity of their Apollo, and therefore stiled him *Ἀσέβης*, indirect, or deceitful, whereby, as Tully says of him, *happen what would, the god was sure to be in the right* [u]. Their contradictions were not less frequent, in the answers ascribed to the same deity. What Apollo delivered at *Claros*, was sometimes quite contrary to what he delivered at *Delphos*, and that at *Dodona* quite opposite to the two first, and this to the very same question. This happened daily, and Apollo, to retrieve his reputation, was obliged to own, that he often lied, but was forced to it by *Destiny* [v]. But what completely shews, that their oracles and prodigies proceeded from an evil genius, delighting in the conquests of error, in extinguishing every glimpse of pure reason, and all sentiments of humanity, is the abomination of the rites and sacrifices required by them.

XVI. It was the belief of Heathens, as well as of the Faithful, that there were good and evil angels [x], comprehended by them under the general denomination of *demons*. This distinction came from their experience of the bent they had

[t] *Herodotus* lib. i.

[u] *Utrum horum accidisset, verum oraculum fuisset. Cic. de Divin. lib. ii.*

[v] *Porphy. apud Euseb. Præp. lib. vi. c. 5.*

[x] *Labes apud Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. ix. c. 19. Plato passim. præsert. lib. x. de legi. Plutarch. de Isid. & Osir. Apul. de Deo Sacr. &c.*

had to do good or evil to mankind. Whether this was derived from the light of nature, or from the scriptures, which is more probable, is not material. The fact, *that they maintained it*, is incontestable. Such oracles, therefore, and prodigies, which could not be accounted for by human imposture, as superior to the laws of nature *known* to man, were justly imputed by the Fathers to their wicked dæmons: not only by an argument *ad hominem*, in their disputes with Pagans, but as warranted in it by the divine authority of the scriptures. Thus the credit of human testimony, even from a Heathen, may stand firm, though in behalf of the *marvelous*; and be equally credited, when it delivers the effects of *human*, as well as of *dæmoniacal* imposture. That these oracles, in many cases, proceeded from such impure and seducing spirits, may be concluded on these reasons.

XVII. Because they commanded human sacrifices to be offered to them, nor was there any libation more commonly thirsted after by *Apollo*, than of human blood [y]. He was not to be appeased but by such barbarous sacrifices, and whole cities were sometimes comprehended in the cruel destiny. Disconsolate nature sought some relief against such rigorous laws. Parents abhorring the effusion of their own blood, to evade it, substituted their slaves instead of their
in

[y] *Dionys. Halicarn. Diod. Sicul. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. iv. c. 7. Oenom. apud eund. lib. v. c. 19. & 17. Plutarch. in Themist. Plin. lib. ii. c. 8. Justin. Apol. i. Clemens Alex. in Protreptico. Vid. Hyg. fab.*

children, who were demanded. Merciless *Apollo* would not take the change; his anger was to be assuaged by more precious victims, and the son died by the parent's hand. It is *CEnomaus's* reproach to the oracle, which had commanded [z] the *Athenians* to send yearly seven men and seven women into *Crete*, to be there sacrificed, in order to appease the *manes* of *Androgeus*, the son of *Minos*. A sentence executed during the space of near five centuries, even to the time of *Socrates*.

XVIII. This is farther proved from the impurity of their rites and ceremonies, the adulteries, incests, lubricity of the dances and public sports, shocking to reason and the light of nature, not only warranted and encouraged, but enjoined and commanded by these oracles; excesses too abominable for a Christian to transcribe from their Heathen authors [a]. This is also made out from the magical doctrines and precepts, by which their deluded followers are taught [b], how these deities are to be interrogated,

[z] Deligite ex omni septem vos corpora sexu,
Atque ea Minoi regi mandate quot annis;
Per mala sic hæc vestra Dei placabitis iram.

Euseb. Præp. Ev. lib. v.

[a] *Ovid. Fast.* lib. v. vers. 330, & seq. *Porphy.* lib. ii. *de non-esu animal.* *August.* lib. x. *de Civ. Dei*, c. 12. *Orig. cont. Cels.* lib. iii. & viii. *Porphy.* Ep. ad *Anch. Ægypt.* *Plutarch.* in *Anton.* *Jamblic.* *de myst. Ægypt.* lib. vi. c. 5, 6, 7. *Apuleius, Lucan.* l. ix.

[b] ————— piasque

Tunc effunde preces simulachro, & debita solve
Vota. Hæc si facies, per somnum meque videbis.

Apud Euseb. lib. v. c. 7.

Invitum me audi, quando me lege ligasti.

Apollo apud Porphy.

gated, how compelled to answer by these hellish arts. The imposture is not less evident, whether this be imputed to their gods, or to their juggling priests; to their priests, if the events, answering their predictions, do not surpass the power of human *science* and *artifice*; to their gods, if they do. For the existence of evil spirits involves no implicancy, and is so far from inconsistency with a *being* infinitely good and true, that it manifestly proves his *existence*. And, indeed, if reason alone is consulted, it may very well seem impossible, that a religion calculated to encourage every inclination to evil, and even going beyond all that nature in its utmost depravity and corruption could suggest [c], should have prevailed so long and among

[c] All these abominations against the light of nature, magical arts and doctrines, incantations, love-charms, daemons inspirers of dreams, malevolent spirits delighting in the steam and blood of victims, monstrous lusts, &c. (1), are owned and acknowledged by Heathens; and are known even to school-boys from their *Classics* (2), where the soul, spirit, and bulk of Pagan theology is interwoven with fables, &c.—Dr. *Middleton* brings in the *Fathers* guilty of a false imputation for making use of this argument, which they managed with great strength and success against the Heathens. But where can the fault be, if the Fathers objected to the

Heathens

(1) Free Inquiry, p. 66, & seq.

(2) Plautus Amphitr. Terentius Eunuch. act. III. scenâ v. cum multis aliis.

Inde etiam poetarum furor fabulis humanos errores alentium quibus visus est Jupiter voluptate concubitûs delinitus duplicasse noctem. Quid aliud est vitia incendere, quam autores illis inscribere, & dare morbo, exemplo divinitatis, excusabilem licentiam? Senec. lib. i. de Brevit. vitæ, cap. 16.

among so many nations, had not evil powers of a superior nature concurred with the imposture of artful men, to this effect.

XIX. From these evil powers, which we have seen confessed by Heathenism and by ancient philosophy, these oracles and prodigies partly proceeded. *By these, says Porphyry, who are opposite to the gods, all mischievous arts are put in practice. For whosoever apply themselves to delude men's minds by evil arts, and work mischievous effects, do worship those spirits, and their ruler, by*

Heathens what they professed to believe? An argument *ad hominem* is nothing new. The Fathers, however, believed the *agency* of evil spirits, by themselves, or by necromancers, magicians, &c. Is it a crime in the Fathers to believe upon very good grounds what Dr. Middleton thinks *false* and *incredible*? As long as the Doctor brings no better reason than his modest assertion for the present modish way of thinking *so*, contrary to all *history* and to *revelation*, the Fathers will be acquitted from any imputation, that is pretended to be wrongfully made to Heathenism. But they thought the Pagan idolatry and the whole art of magic to *have been managed by the craft and agency of dæmons*; the Doctor should have added, and by *impostors* and *deceitful men*, which the Fathers likewise knew, and objected to them from their own *concessions* (3). But the belief of any dæmoniacal agency is *a proof of the greatest credulity*. We may infer; if so, it is a proof of the *grossest* superstition; and the Doctor must consequently rank among fables

(3) Multi vatum atque aruspicum non solum priscis, sed etiam nostris temporibus tormentis in judicio coacti, universam rem suis inventionibus fieri ediderunt; à quibus modos quoque artificii exquisitiùs patefactos non ignoramus, qui tanquam seductores & malefici viri ultimo supplicio secundum leges affecti sunt. Quæ res adeo clæræ sunt ut neminem lateant. *Ensch. Præpar. Evang. lib. iv.*

an especial worship. For they can delude by apparent prodigies. . . . Lying is peculiar to them. Their ruler, and they themselves, would fain be reckoned as gods. . . . The Egyptian priests hold it as an uncontroverted point, that there is a kind of spirits addicted to all manner of deceitfulness, appearing in various forms, wily, sometimes personating gods, at other devils, and the souls of the dead. . . . full of pride, delighting in the greasy steams and fumes of victims [d]. It was then far from an absurdity in the

fables the scriptures both old and new, which authorise this Christian belief of the Fathers (not a bare credulity) concerning malevolent spirits, their impostures, and lying wonders (4), and deprive them of their inspiration, from the first of *Genesis* to the end of the *Revelation*. This opens a broad way for the Doctor's conclusion, that Heathen miracles, those of a *Simon*, a *Carpocrates*, are all to be admitted or rejected equally with those of the Church of *Christ*. And thus the professed Christian, but real Infidel, the earnest opposer of all wonderful agency in evil spirits of a nature superior to man, gives, in himself, an instance of insincerity, and of having himself been deluded by the spirit of error.

[d] Per illos oppositos diis omnis ars malefica perficitur. Nam qui per malas artes, animis illudere, res pravas efficere student, illos spiritus & eorum præsidem maximè colunt. Possunt enim hi prodigiorum specie imponere. Per hos philtrea, & alia ad amores pertinentia miseri homines sibi quærunt. Omnis enim mala libido, & opum spes & gloriæ ab his maximè spiritibus, præcipuè verò fraudes. Mendacium enim his proprium. Dii siquidem esse volunt, & qui eorum princeps est, ipse Deus haberi. *Porphyr. De non-esu animal. lib. ii.*

Illi vero (*Ægyptii sacerdotes*) illud extra controversiam ponunt, esse genus quoddam spirituum omni fraudulentæ

(4) Dr. *Middleton's Examination of the Intent of Prophecy*, pag. 123, 131.

the Christian Fathers to ascribe evil effects to evil causes. The opinions received among Heathens, their philosophy, even the light of reason, by which the Deist pretends so much to be guided, will justify this manner of reasoning. But *Porphyry*, *Celsus*, and the *Jews*, ascribing the miracles of Christ to the power of *Satan*, or any imposture, and those *Sectaries*, who attribute the miracles of the Church to the same causes, cannot possibly avoid being censured for speaking, at least, inconsistently. For the kingdom of *Satan* [e] would be no less *divided against itself* by working, or concurring to, the miracles of the Church, than those of Christ: because the *establishment* of the *Church* by Christ, and the *duration* of the same *one, holy, catholic, apostolic* Church through all ages, are both *facts*, that rest upon the same truth and evidence.

XX. It is not incumbent on me to shew, in every particular, the infinite difference betwixt *Divine* and these *Heathen* miracles. This far exceeds my plan, which engages me only with Christian Divines, and has been performed by numbers, both of ancient and modern, even learned Protestant authors, in their proofs of Christia-

dulentia^s inserviens, multiforme, versutum, quod modò deos simulat, modò dæmones, modò mortuorum animas, eoque modo omnia eos posse immittere quæ bona, quæque mala habentur. Ad vera autem bona, quæ in animo consistunt, nihil eos posse, neque eorum habere notitiam; sed male uti otio, ludificari & impedire eos qui in viâ sunt ad virtutem, plenos esse fastiûs, gaudentes nidoribus ac victimis. *Porphy. De non-esu animal.* lib. ii.

[e] Matth. xii. 25.

Christianity. It suffices my purpose to have given an evident criterion, by which an *ordinary spectator*, with the common use of reason, may clearly distinguish the Scripture-miracles from those of Heathenism. For Heathen miracles manifestly proceed from an evil principle, and are wrought in the names of gods, the plurality of which alone is to pure reason the grossest error, that ever could enter into the heart of man: Scripture-miracles, those of *Moses* and others, were manifestly wrought in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth: those of Christ in the name of God his Father; the miracles of the Apostles in the name of *Christ*, the Son of God, and God himself; all which, as we have seen, could not possibly be wrought in this sacred name, but by the divine power. Hence, the very contradictory to Dr. *Clark's* positions (*f*), to which the reader is referred, is truth, a sacred truth. Whereas not one of the Heathen prodigies, commonly objected, could be proved to surpass the power of man, or an evil spirit, to *tempt*, to *try*, to *punish*; and might manifestly be discovered to be *such*. And consequently to this *criterion*, which, indeed, speaks its own evidence, it is absurd, and implies a contradiction, to suppose, that an evil agent could work a miracle under this sacred attestation, or that such an agent could work a miracle, that had an *evil tendency*, or, that a miracle wrought by the divine power can want any *circumstance* or *condition* to make it rationally credible, when duly proposed. Yet

Sectaries

[*f*] See Chap. III. art. xx.

Sectaries and Infidels have pleaded the pretended absurdity of Christian doctrines, and the want of some *circumstances and conditions*, to reject the miracles of the Church, as they rejected those of Christ. And, indeed, the same pretexts may be a very weak argument against *all*. But a divine miracle precludes all these objections; or it would be insufficient to the end for which it was intended: and God would want a *means* of immediate conviction, and the best adapted to all capacities, *the most expedient, the most necessary* [g], for the end he proposes. Thus every falshood proves a *wonder* wrought in confirmation of it, to be a false miracle; because a miracle cannot be wrought in the name of God to lead into error: and, by a contrary rule, every truth possible to be communicated by God to man, may receive the sanction of a miracle wrought in his holy name. Here the *author* of the *Previous Questions* [b] may find by what he may distinguish a *demoniacal wonder* from a *true miracle* [i].

XXI. As

[g] See Chap. I. art. x.

[b] See *Preface to the previous Questions*.

[i] The importance and want of characteristic marks, whereby to distinguish false from true, demoniacal from divine miracles, is as much expressed and owned by Dr. *Middleton*, as by his associate Dr. *S---*. It must surely be of the utmost concern to us, says he in the Preface to his *Free Inquiry*, p. xvi. *how far the authority* (of primitive antiquity) *may be trusted, and how far the hand of God continued to operate visibly with the saints of those ages, by giving a divine sanction to the doctrines, which they taught, and rites, which they established . . . it must be of great importance to have a rule for distin-*

XXI. As not one of all these Heathen prodigies, which have ever been compared to Christian miracles, can be proved to surpass the power

distinguishing the true (miracles) from the false; to discern those, which God had stamped with his authority for the common good of mankind, from those, which fraud and craft had imposed. Here he owns, besides the importance of this rule wanted by them, a truth, which he had before confessed in his Introductory Discourse, page lxvii. that miracles give a divine sanction to the Church's rites and doctrines. He had just owned another truth, that there is not a single point in all history, so constantly, explicitly, and unanimously affirmed by them all (Church-historians) as the continual succession of these (miraculous) powers through all ages, from the earliest Father, who first mentions them, down to the time of the Reformation. Which same succession is still farther deduced, by persons of the most eminent character, for their probity, learning, and dignity in the Romish Church, to this very day. So that the only doubt that can remain with us, is, whether the Church-historians are to be trusted or not: for if any credit be due to them in the present case, it must either reach to ALL, or to NONE. Had he stood to his resolution of pushing truth to its full extent, without any fear of its consequences, and too great glare, as he promised, he must have owned, that the Church, which in the Apostles days was inaccessible to imposture, continued so ever after: but, instead of this, he enters on a comparison between the *Heathenish* and *Sectarian* with *Christian* miracles; and pushing infidelity instead of truth to its utmost extent, he attempts a parallel between them, which is visibly very imperfect from the want on one side of those distinctive marks, which neither Heathen nor Sectary can assign for their pretended miracles; and in this manner, confounding truth with falsehood, representing both under the same colours, he concludes for admitting ALL, or NONE. This, indeed.

power of man or an evil spirit, so not one of these oracles ever predicted a fact depending on a free cause. They related to facts distant only from the place, where the oracle was delivered. The deity denounced in one place, what was doing in another, or the evil he was going to do, or cease from doing. Such a knowledge, it is plain, exceeds not the powers of a spiritual, unembodied intelligence. And neither the Fathers [k], nor Christians, contest this manner of divination with the devil. To ground a serious objection, it is necessary, that an incontestable example

deed, is, in the Doctor's *system*, a necessary, but fatal step; from rejecting all authority to reject all Christian miracles, and, at last, the revelation they were wrought to support.

[k] Omnis spiritus ales, hoc & angeli & dæmones. Igitur momento ubique sunt. Totus orbis illis locus illis unus est. Quid ubi geratur, tam facile sciunt quam enunciant. Velocitas divinitas creditur, quia substantia ignoratur. Sic & autores interdum videri volunt eorum, quæ annuntiant, & sunt planè malorum nonnunquam, bonorum tamen nunquam. Æmulantur divinitatem, dum furantur divinationem. *Tertul. Apol.*

Oracula efficiunt falsis pluribus involuta; nam & falluntur, & fallunt, ut & nescientes sinceram veritatem, & quam sciunt in perditionem sui non confitentes. *Minut. Felix in Octav.*

Quæ cum ita sint, primùm sciendum est, quoniam de divinatione dæmonum quæstio est, illos ea plerumque prænuntiare quæ ipsi facturi sunt. Accipiunt enim sæpe potestatem & morbos immittere, & ipsum aërem vitiando morbidum reddere: aliquando autem non quæ ipsi faciunt, sed quæ naturalibus signis futura prænoscent; quæ signa in hominum sensus venire non possunt. *August. de Divinat. Dæmon. c. 5.*

example should be produced of facts, which were not to happen till many ages after [l]; of strange, indeterminate facts, depending on free causes, being foretold by their oracles. The Scripture every where abounds with prophecies of verified events, and has the concurrent testimony of Heathen historians to vouch their truth. And the holy writ frequently reproaches the gods of Heathenism with their ignorance in this point. *Shew the things that are to come hereafter*, says God to them by his prophets, *that we may know that ye are gods. . . . They see not, nor know . . . I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure [m].* The divine providence, therefore, cannot be arraigned for the long duration and the wide diffusion of their Heathen worship. The light of nature alone, accompanying *every man that comes into this world*, was abundantly sufficient to discover the delusion; and where that and reason alone can guard against it, no farther assistance is in rigour due from God to man. No wonder then, that *being without excuse, and knowing the eternal power and Godhead, from the visible things that are made; and glorifying him not as God, they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. and God gave them up unto uncleanness and vile affections [n].*

XXII. Now

[l] August. de Divinat. Dæm. lib. i. c. 5. S. Thom. 1. part. quæst. 57. art. 3.

[m] Isai. xli. 23. xli. 9, 10.

[n] Rom. i.

XXII. Now we are upon comparisons, the reader may be inclined to consider, how those *Spirits of Porphyry*, which were execrable to the Heathens in their greatest depravity, are imitated by this *genius* or *spirit* of the author or promoter of a system grounded on infidelity, by confounding *Divine* with *Heathen* miracles. They were enemies to all sanctity; this spirit wages war with all the saints, without exception, from the time of the Apostles; assumes, like those, different characters, *good* and *bad*, the better to compass evil; pretends to candour and truth, whilst he charges the whole Christian world with lying and deceit, the blackest forgery and imposture. They were full of pride, and would be accounted *gods*, and this spirit of a single Doctor begins [*o*] with opposing his *PRIVATE* judgment, and preferring it to that of universal Christianity, on a subject of the highest *importance*, which, to believe him, *none before had ever examined*, or but *little understood*, besides himself. He proceeds, accordingly, to exalt himself, by trampling on all the wisdom, learning, virtue, of the Christian world in preceding ages. They could personate both gods and devils, and *this* could personate Christianity, could swear to teach and preach it; yet at *Rome* [*p*] could build Heathen idolatry on the *Rock*, whereon *Christ* built his Church, and in *England*, pursuing the same plan, could build Christianity on a bottom (the only one, he says, which consistent

[*o*] See first page of his Pref. to the Free Inquiry; and § 1. of the Introduction to this Treatise.

[*p*] See his Letter from *Rome*.

sistent Protestantism could have) which, is confessed to be *subversive of the very citadel, the fortress itself of Christianity* [q], i. e. a bottom suitable to *nominal Christianity and real infidelity*. Those spirits were delighted with sacrifices, and the odours steaming from them; and the boast this spirit makes of clearing a point, *which had puzzled all the Doctors*, the whole Reformation, to his time, with *the general approbation, the favourable reception his system had met with both among the Clergy and Laity* [r], shews, what victims and incense he most delighted in. This, however, is certain, that a spirit so manifestly *double*, and that, by principle, so opposite to Christian simplicity, and the reason of a sober Deist, could be no other in the Creed of a *Catholic* or a *Protestant*, of a *Christian* or an *Infidel*, than an *evil spirit*. But from Heathen miracles let us proceed to examine Sect miracles.

XXIII. All sects have challenged miracles; must *all* be admitted or rejected? All fiction has aimed at a resemblance with truth, and human weakness is apt to ground conclusions on imperfect similitudes: must the Doctor's logic take place, and *all* truth be rejected [s], equally with fiction, or *all* fiction be admitted equally with truth? Reason alone, which observes the defects of Heathen miracles, may discover many in the tenets and pretended miracles, which sectaries oppose to the doctrines and miracles of the

[q] Pref. to Mr. *Brooke's* Examination of the Free Inquiry, p. xxiv.

[r] Pref. to Free Inquiry, p. iii.

[s] A singulis ad omnia non valet consequentia.

the Church. Dr. *Middleton* must allow this, with respect to the objections made to the miracles of Christ and his Apostles; and his adversaries, as to the miracles and opinions of the sects, which sided against Christianity in the three first centuries. The *rankness* of the ninety heresies, which was so obvious to the reason of a *Middleton*, was as evident to any rational Infidel of those days. It appeared then as clear, as it has done ever since, that truth could not dwell in the center of contradictions. The foundation, as we shall see hereafter, of all these contradictions and *rank* errors, on which they were *all equally* grounded, could be no foundation of truth. And God neither could approve the foundation, nor the superstructures; nor give them the sanction of his authority and power. In effect, the case is the same with all other sects, as well as the ninety heresies, if considered by mere reason, and looked upon as productive of so many contradictions and errors, the *fruits*, by which our blessed Lord says [t] *you shall know them*.

XXIV.

[t] Matth. vii. 15, 20.

You will observe, says a noble Infidel, convinced of this truth, *the characters of those, who began* (the Reformation:) *the unsystematical manner in which it was carried on . . . the want of concert, nay, even of charity, among the Reformers . . . You will learn what to think of the several religions that unite against the Roman, and yet hate one another most heartily; what to think of the several sects that have sprouted like suckers from the same great roots.* Lord Bolingbrook's Letters on the use and study of History, vol. I. let. v. p. 209.

N. B. This proves, that an effect opposite to *order, union, charity*, cannot be from God, as a *cause*.

XXIV. Thus far reason alone proceeds, but assisted and guided by faith, it discerns as many distinctive and obvious marks of imposture in the miracles pretended to be wrought in opposition to the Church, as there are clear and distinctive marks of Heresy in the Sectarists, who have *gone forth* from the Church, and rebelled against her; and discovers as many proofs of the deceit, as there are distinctive marks of the Church. That heresies would be, has been foretold by the Scripture, and that *signs and wonders* would accompany them. But *believe them not* [u], is the express command of Christ. Whence the same marks, that denote and distinguish the Church, impress a character of falsehood warranted by divine authority, on every pretended miracle wrought in proof and evidence of doctrines contrary to the Church. And hence the faithful, forewarned and fore-armed, if seduced, act against reason and religion.

XXV. What then, if great *signs and wonders* were wrought by *Pbarao's* magicians, and such shall be wrought hereafter by the *great Antichrist* [v]? What, if *Caiphas*, a wicked man, being the *Higb-priest that year*, truly prophesied [x]; *Judas*, a thief, who *bad the bag*, and *cared not for the poor* [y], received power with the other Apostles to work miracles [z], and could glory with them, that *the devils were sub-*
from

[u] Matth. xxiv. 23, 24, 25, 26.

[v] Theff, ii. 9.

[x] John xi. 51.

[y] John xii. 6. xiii. 29.

[z] Matth. x. 1.

ject to him [a]; Saul, after the Lord departed from him, was found prophesying among the prophets [b]; Balaam, a false prophet and an Infidel [c], with the false prophets mentioned by Christ, prophesied, and the latter also cast out devils [d]? As to the signs and wonders wrought by Pharaoh's magicians, and those which are to be done by Antichrist, we are assured by the sacred text, that the first were wrought by their enchantments; and, as to the latter, that the coming of Antichrist is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders [e]. And if a Chrysostome [f], a Jerome, an Euthymius, a Theophylact, have produced some examples of miracles wrought by Infidels, no more can be concluded, than that true miracles have been wrought with, or without faith, not to oppose, but to confirm, the true doctrine. So Balaam confirmed not his own, but the faith of the people of God; and the false prophets, who cast out devils, not in their name, but the name of Jesus Christ, confirmed his doctrine by miracles, which tended also to raise the belief of it in themselves. For this reason he said to John, who complained of one casting out devils in his name, and forbid him, because he followeth not us . . . Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name,

[a] Luke x. 17.

[b] 1 Sam. xix. 24.

[c] Numb. xxiv.

[d] Matth. vii. 22.

[e] Exod. vii. 11. 2 Theff. ii. 9.

[f] Hom. xxv.

name, that can lightly speak evil of me [g]. No wonder, that Christ should derive his glory from the miraculous works of these false prophets, who extorted it from the devils themselves, coming out of many, crying and saying, *Thou art Christ, the Son of God [b].* But if the sign or wonder is wrought to confirm false doctrine, what distinguishes the sect, distinguishes the sign, or pretended miracle; as it is impossible, that the divine power should act against divine truth; or that reason guided by faith, should not know the tree by its fruits.

XXVI. We have seen, that among other marks, which distinguish the true Church, her miracles are inconsistent with the truth of any sect that opposes her. Reason and the light of faith shew, that Christ impowered his Apostles to work miracles in confirmation of his doctrine; and that the conversion of great part of the world was the consequence of this power. Where Christ says *John xiv. 12. He that believeth in me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater than these shall he do,* it does not appear, that the power of working miracles is confined to the Apostles, or to others, during the lives of the Apostles. But Protestants should give us clear, evident *Scripture-texts* to shew, that no miracles could be wrought after the death of the Apostles, before we can refuse all credit to Church-history. As they have never been able to give us any such proof of their precarious hypo-

[g] Mark ix. 37, 38.

[b] Luke iv. 41.

hypothesis, it may be lawful to believe miracles wrought in the Church after any of the periods fixed by those gentlemen. It is certain from the plain text, that the promises of miracles made by Christ to his Church, were not limited [i]; nor does there appear any the least foundation for men to prescribe bounds to them, and to say they are not to continue. It even appears by monuments of undoubted credit, that these promises have been accomplished by miracles to this day, that they were not limited to any age; and, by the Scriptures, that they were *annexed* and *limited* to the *true Church* only, exclusive of all sects. This gives solid and irresistible reasons to conclude, *First*, That the Church, in which frequent miracles are wrought, is the *true Church*: *Secondly*, That no *Church*, which is not known by the name of *Catholic* and in which no miracles are wrought, can possibly be the *true Church*.

XXVII. As in the *Christian*, so in the *Jewish* Church God gave sufficient marks, whereby his people were to distinguish true miracles from human or diabolical imposture. In the famous passage of *Deuteronomy* [k] mentioned above, (Chap. III. xxvi.) the imposture was manifest from the *seduction* which was proposed; *Let us go after other gods, and let us serve them.* Again, *The prophet, which shall presume to speak in my name, which I have not commanded, or that shall speak in the name of other gods* [l].... *When a prophet*

[i] Mark xvi. 17.

[k] Deut. xiii. 1, & seq.

[l] Deut. xviii. 20.

prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken [m]: Here lying no less than *seduction* manifested the imposture. The fidelity of the *Jews* was tried by this temptation, but those that yielded, could plead no excuse. The temptation and imposture were foretold; the faithful were forewarned and guarded against fraud; and *Christians* are expressly commanded by *Christ* himself to beware of false prophets [n], innovators in doctrine, shewing signs and wonders, crying out, *Lo! here is Christ*; and at the same time assured by his divine authority, that all impostors may be easily discovered by their fruits.

XXVIII. But the divine wisdom, not content with having made this general and effectual provision for both Churches against imposture, has appointed in each a *tribunal*, to whose decision *faith* and *reason* may acquiesce in every possible emergency. In whatever matter of controversy too hard [o] for private judgment to determine, God commanded the *Jews* to consult the *High Priest*, to abide by the sentence of the Consistory wherein he presided, as authorized by God himself; *They shall shew thee the truth of the judgment; and the man that will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the Priest, who ministreth at that time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall*

[m] Deut. viii. 22.

[n] Matth. vii. 14, 16.

[o] Deut. xvii. 8, & seq.

shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel.

Thus we have seen St. *John* ascribing the true sentence given by *Caiphas* in this Consistory, to his being High Priest of that year; and we know, that Christ himself commanded the observance and doing of all that the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in *Moses's* seat, bid to observe [p]. Here reason guided by faith, must reflect upon the better promises, made to the Church, of her preservation from all imposture, and can no more question their being fulfilled, than it can doubt of God's veracity and power. Nay, reason alone cannot except against the tribunal, when no miracle is allowed authentic, that has not the proper sanction of ecclesiastical authority. The common sense of all nations and persuasions directs them to trust the decision of all questions of fact, their lives, fortunes, and whatever else is dear to them, to the same form of judicature, where inquiries are not half so strictly made as in the processes for canonizing Saints; and where all depends on the testimony of living witnesses [q] upon oath, the supposed integrity of a jury, the presumed equity and abilities of judges, who can have no title to supernatural assistance. What reason can refuse the same credit to the Church after the most rigorous scrutinies?

XXIX. Hence a proper judgment may be formed on the pretended miracles of *Abbé Paris*.
Doctor

[p] Matth. xxiii. 2, 3.

[q] In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Matth. xviii. 16. Deut. xix. 15.

Doctor Middleton adds upon this subject to what he has said above, that distinct accounts of these miracles, which were carefully drawn up and distributed among the people, had an attestation of them much more strong and authentic, than what has ever been alledged for the miracles of any other age since the Apostles [r]. He is also pleased to inform us, that this same Abbé Paris was a zealous Jansenist, and a warm opposer of that Bull or Constitution of Clement XI, called Unigenitus, by which all the doctrines of his sect, he says, were condemned [s]. To finish the character, he ought to have acquainted the public, that this zealot and sectarist, who, when living, never wrought a miracle in the name of Jesus Christ, ended his days in a formal act and profession of disobedience, and an appeal, not only from the authority of Pope Clement XI, the bishops of the Gallican Church, his lawful and canonical superiors, but from the authority of the Church represented by all the bishops in the known world; that Church, the doctrines of which (like Dr. Middleton with regard to the Church of England) he had sworn to profess and believe. These bishops had unanimously received this Constitution of the chief Pastor, and with him condemned all the doctrines of that sect, and consequently all the Abbé's pretended miracles. His contumacy and disobedience to the express command of bearing the Church, canonized him with the party; and as they were the distinguishing marks of his pretended sanctity, so they were con-

[r] Free Inquiry, p. 224.

[s] Ibidem, p. 223.

convincing proofs of the imposture of his miracles.

XXX. To what purpose then is it to alledge *three*, or three hundred volumes, with their original vouchers, certificates, affidavits, of such miracles as these, which can possibly prove no more than that they were the works of the devil, or the effects of human imposture? If ascribed to the former, the same must be said of them as of the pretended miracles of the Heathens. In that hypothesis, as *Satan* possessed *Apollo's* priestesses, *Montanus's* women, he might also possess *Paris's Maximilla's* with such convulsions as never accompanied the spirit of God; and by their obscenity manifested from what spirit they proceeded. He might also cure distempers, as among the Heathens; and, without departing from his evil intentions, might transform a *Libertine* and *professed Deist* into a professed Sectarist and Fanatic: unless it can be made evident, that *Satan* was less pleased with the bigotted effrontery of a votary carrying his pompous impostures up to the Prince's throne [t], from thence to be diffused over his whole *Christian* kingdom, than with the daring impiety of a *libertine* and a debauchee. If they were the effects of human imposture, as, on due examination, they proved to be, what spirit moved our Doctor, a professed Christian, to

[t] Mons^r. de Montgeron published a select number of these miracles in a pompous volume in 4^{to}, which he dedicated to the king, and presented to him in person. Ibid. 224.

compare the *lying wonders* of a day, no sooner seen than vanished, with the miracles of the *Church of Christ*, the *succession* of which he had owned was deduced ever since the *Apostles*, through all ages, to this very day, by men the most eminent for their probity, learning, and dignity [u], that the world had produced. Upon the whole then, what may we conclude? That *M. des Vaux*, and the other Protestant Divine, mentioned by the Doctor, who resolve all these pretended miracles into diabolical or human imposture, or partly into one and the other, shewed themselves both *Divines* and *Christians*: but that *Dr. Middleton*, by comparing and preferring this palpable imposture to all the Church's miracles since the *Apostles*, plainly shewed he was *neither*.

XXXI. The truth is, that *Montgeron* and *Middleton's* twenty-two *Curés* pressed *Cardinal Noailles*, then Archbishop of *Paris*, to examine these miracles. The Doctor seems to lay great stress on his twenty-two *Curés*; what a handful, when compared to all the Bishops and the inferior clergy only, of that great kingdom! However, the examination was made, by a public judicial inquest, and in consequence of it, an ordinance was published November 8, 1735, wherein the most convincing proofs of the perjury of the principal witnesses, of bribery, forgery, and the imposture of these miracles, plainly appeared:

[u] Compare what the Doctor here says of these sect-miracles, with what he has said of the succession of the Church's miracles, Note on art. x.

peared: and so manifestly, that this *Montgeron* had not the face (though he undertook the defence of them against the Archbishop of Sens) to touch on more than five of all that number; *passing by those of them*, says my author [x], *against which the strongest charges of falshood and imposture lay.*

Upon the whole, as a *Middleton* and a *Hume*, great sticklers for *Abbé Paris's* miracles, have turned them against those of the Church of *Christ*; so those scriptures, which foretel, forewarn, forbid to give credit to, the miracles of *false prophets*, *false Christs*, and of *Antichrist* [y], are turned by bare-faced Infidelity against those of *Moses* [z], and of *Christ* himself. In answer to which, and some other objections, wherein Sects and Infidelity generally go hand in hand, borrowing from, and lending each other a mutual assistance; it will be necessary to enter farther into the territories of Infidelity, than might seem required.

[x] See a View of the principal Deistical Writers by *J. Leland*, D. D. vol. ii. p. 109.

[y] Mark xiii. 20.

[z] Exod. chap. viii. ix. x.

CHAP. V.

I. **T**HE attempt of Infidelity to retort the Scriptures against the miracles of *Christ* and those of *Moses*, is stated in the manner following by a learned author, the Abbé *Houtteville*, of the French Academy [a]: “ But you will say, though we should suppose the certainty of the miracles of *JESUS CHRIST*, what can we conclude? That his word is *true*, and his doctrine *divine*? This is not a necessary consequence. Have not great prodigies been wrought by persons engaged in idolatrous worship? The Scripture affords us more than one example; and without running through them all, it is well known what adversaries *Pharao* opposed to *Moses* [b]. It is then evident, that this sign is equivocal, common to true and false doctrines, and, upon this account only, not sufficient to determine those that seek to discern the *true* from the *false*. “ Moreover, *JESUS CHRIST* himself has forbidden giving credit to miracles. *False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect* [c]. Would he have spoken in this manner, if he intended to persuade, that miracles were to be proofs of the doctrine? “ Would

[a] La Religion Chrétienne prouvée par les Faits, Edit. nouvelle, 1744. liv. 3. 8^{me} Difficulté.

[b] Exod. Chap. 7, 8, 9.

[c] Mark xiii. 22.

“ Would he have said that *false Christs* and *false*
 “ *prophets* could work miracles like him?
 “ Whilst he guarded us against them, did he
 “ not give us a caution against himself? Far
 “ then from concluding, as men do: *The mi-*
 “ *miracles of Christ are not to be contested*; they
 “ ought to say: Miracles, according to JESUS
 “ CHRIST, are uncertain signs; the doctrine
 “ must therefore be examined, independently
 “ of the wonderful facts, which seem to be
 “ motives to believe it.”

II. Before we give the *French* author's answer to this objection, it will be proper to remember, that a true miracle is and can only be the work of an infinite power; that God cannot work or permit a miracle to be wrought in his name and by his power for the confirmation of error. Whatever prodigy may be done to confirm dangerous errors, is a false miracle, a lying sign, a deceitful wonder, and cannot be a *supernatural*, but *preternatural* action, which lies within the compass of natural agents, though superior to us in their degree, yet of a limited power and nature. The different acceptation of the term *miracle* causes some difficulty. Though a miracle, in the strict sense of the word, can only be wrought by an infinite power, yet it frequently happens, where the subject matter does not require so much precision, that both Divines and others extend the term to wonderful effects not comprehended in the *laws* of nature *known to us*. Hence it is necessary to distinguish two sorts of miraculous works; some *absolutely*, others only *respectively* miraculous. The *first* exceed all the power of
 created

created agents, and are truly miracles in themselves; the *latter* sort of miraculous works are not so in themselves, because they do not exceed *all*, but only *some* created power; they are miraculous, or rather wonderful, to us, as they go beyond our power and knowledge, though they are within the sphere of activity of superior intelligent beings. The Deist, who, by principle, is no friend to miracles, will not be unwilling to admit, that what is within the reach of limited nature can be no miracle, but something, at most, preternatural. We must, however, observe here, that in miraculous works truly such, which exceed the power of all created nature, nothing, strictly speaking, is a miracle with regard to God, though it is a miracle in itself, with regard to created powers, which the divine power infinitely exceeds.

Now, if we speak of the miracles, which God only can work, it is certain, that whatever instruments he may make use of, God only, *who alone doth great wonders* [d], can be the author of them. And, upon this account, it cannot be doubted, but they are irrefragable and authentic evidences of the truths, which they attest, as they are a language peculiar to God, who declares his intention and will by miraculous effects. Hence the miracles wrought by our blessed Saviour beyond the power of nature, and in proof of his Divinity, were a full condemnation of the Synagogue, who absolutely refused to own him for her Messiah and her God.

But

[d] Psalm cxxxvi. 4.

L

But if we speak of the *second* sort of miracles not *absolutely*, but *respectively* such, which do not surpass the power of nature, but our's only, those are not proofs without farther evidence, because they may be caused not only by the power of God, but that of the devil. Such were the wonders wrought by the evil spirit, who assisted the magicians in the presence of *Pharaoh*; such will be the wonders of *Antichrist*, which will happen about the last period of the world.

The Deist, who objects the wonders wrought by *Pharaoh's* magicians, can lay no great stress on the argument. His whole information is from the holy writ; and he cannot build upon more than that foundation; he does not learn from the sacred text, that the magicians wrought miracles, but that they imitated the miracles of *Moses*: *Now the magicians of Pharaoh they also did in like manner with their enchantments* [e]. The Deist, who allows no miracle, equally rejects the possibility of a miracle by *enchantment*, which is also laughed at by the modern Deist. The Christian looks upon a miracle done by *enchantment* to be a *chimera*, and a monstrous abuse of terms. The most, therefore, that can be made from the Christian's concession, and from the divine writings, is, that the magicians produced real serpents, real frogs and real blood *with their enchantments*, where the terms employed shew to evidence the impossibility of a true miracle, because the effects mentioned were done *with their enchantments*, whereof the power is denied by the Deist, and with

[e] Exod. vii. 11.

with the Christian can never reach to work a true miracle. In the comparison of *Moses* and the magicians, the latter in the holy page appear, on one side, as instruments of the devil, assisted by his power; on the other is seen a man deputed from God, acting under his direction and authority, invested with his power, and performing these miracles by the same divine power. Here is no contrast of miracles, the plain text shews the contrary. Here are the effects of *incantments*, false and deceitful wonders, opposed to the true miracles of *Moses* done by the power of God. Even the magicians own this; when they found, that their art could not reach the production of insects after the fourth miracle wrought by *Moses* in this contention, they cried out, *This is the finger of God* [f], which they did not challenge on their side, and by which they saw the power of the infernal spirit restrained. If the Deist will be consistent, the mere light of reason shews, that God cannot contradict himself, that he could not depute a *Moses*, and invest magicians with his authority and power to prevent his commission to *Moses* taking place. He suffered the magicians to exert their art, he tried the fidelity of his servant *Moses*, but gave him at last the advantage over his adversaries.

The Deist has as little reason to plead the miracles of *Antichrist*. The Scripture points them out as impostures; the prophecies, which are of long standing, mark them with the character of falshood; *his coming is after the work-*

ing

[f] Exod. viii. 19.

ing of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders [g]. In a word, the plain text shews, that there are no miracles in either instance of the magicians of *Pbaraob* or *Anticbrist*; the inspired writings are of themselves a full confutation of the Deist, who evidently begs the question; and a sufficient guard to believers against seduction and deceit.

III. But to prevent all cavils, it may be proper to add, that though a true miracle, in the rigour of the term, wrought in the name of God to prove the truth of the gospel, cannot be an equivocal, useless, or uncertain sign of the truth of the doctrine, yet there may be miracles, which do not immediately appear to be such. The objection against these cannot affect real and undoubted miracles, and only shews, that such events are perhaps not miraculous; and consequently, where the certainty of the miracle fails, the certainty of the proof must. Though Paganism affords some wonderful events, which may be questioned whether they are miraculous, as being within the compass of the natural agency of spiritual beings, such as the stream of fire from a burning mountain in *Sicily* [b] dividing to leave a free passage for a son, who carried his aged father to save him from the flames, *Claudia* the Vestal drawing with her girdle a large ship to the shore in proof of her innocence, and another to the same purpose carrying water in a sieve; though such passages are related, there seems no difficulty in allowing, that these wonders

[g] Theff. ii. 9.

[b] *Arist.* de mirab. auscult.

ders may have been wrought immediately by God, to approve filial duty to parents, and to vindicate the character of the innocent, far from being a confirmation of idolatry, as the Deist himself is convinced.

This abundantly shews the weakness of an objection raised upon a mistake of what is so plainly the obvious sense of the Scripture. Yet let the objection have its full weight, and let this Deistical supposition pass; the Deist will still be confuted by his princip'es; these will demonstrate the supposition to be groundless, and the advantage will remain in favour of the miracles wrought in confirmation of Christian doctrine. This is effectually proved in the following answer of the *French* author cited above, who lets the supposition pass, and following the footsteps of Monsieur *Pascal* [i], confutes the Deist in the following manner. But first the reader is desired to cast an eye on the objection stated at the head of this chapter.

IV. " I do not know [k] whether Deists pretend to triumph over us by this argument. " For my part I think, *though the whole was* " *granted*, the advantage would still lie on the " side of the gospel: so solid, so convincing " and rational is the doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, " even when stript of that external authority " which it receives from miracles. This has " been shewn by several eminent authors, and " I could perhaps add some proofs to theirs. " In

[i] *Pensées de M. Pascal sur la Religion, &c.* Tit. xxvii.

[k] *Loc. cit.* § 1.

“ In the midst of plenty they pitched upon the
 “ choicest. But as I confine myself to de-
 “ monstrate by *facts*, I must keep within the
 “ bounds, which I have prescribed to myself,
 “ and on that footing I enter upon the particu-
 “ lars of this objection.

“ Several prodigies have happened in the
 “ midst of idolatry. I will not dispute it. This
 “ is supported by examples not to be contested,
 “ which are found in the Scriptures. Can God
 “ be the cause of the fall of man? Can he lay
 “ efficacious and unavoidable snares for him,
 “ employ his power to deceive him, and oblige
 “ him indispensably to believe an imposture?
 “ No; without doubt, a being infinitely per-
 “ fect hates error; he cannot look upon it with
 “ indifference: a being infinitely good loves
 “ his creature, and neither will nor can con-
 “ trive his ruin. The Deist will not deny this
 “ principle, which we are both obliged to ad-
 “ mit.

“ This is not all; and, if he argue conse-
 “ quently, he must own, that God is bound to
 “ give men his assistance against miracles that
 “ favour falshood, whether these miracles are
 “ wrought by him to try us, or whether they
 “ come from an evil principle, that seeks to se-
 “ duce us. This is a truth likewise grounded
 “ on the wisdom, power and goodness of
 “ God.

“ But what must, what can he do, not to be
 “ an accomplice of our fall, and not to force
 “ our acquiescency to falshood? Two things.
 “ Either he must forewarn, and forbid us to
 “ to believe these miracles; or work *miracles*
 “ supe-

“ superior to *those*, by which our fidelity is
 “ tried.

“ We must therefore submit, where there
 “ are evident miracles that we are not forbid to
 “ believe, which are not opposed and eclipsed
 “ by superior miracles; for God alone has a
 “ sovereign power over all nature; and all that
 “ is contrary to its laws is an evident sign of
 “ his will. In the same manner, where there
 “ are miracles, which have been foretold with
 “ a prohibition of believing them, or where
 “ superior miracles discredit the former, we
 “ must be faithful to the greater authority.
 “ For God only can foretel what is to come,
 “ and he only has a boundless power. No-
 “ thing is evident, if this is not.

“ V. But in the mean time the first part of the
 “ objection is destroyed by these principles;
 “ miracles continue their possession of au-
 “ thorizing true doctrine, and those, which
 “ have happened in the center of idolatry, are
 “ of no service to prove the contrary. The
 “ *Egyptians* work great prodigies in the pre-
 “ sence of *Pharaoh*, they imitate those of *Moses*;
 “ like him they turn all the water of the *Nile*
 “ into blood, they change their rods into ser-
 “ pents, they produce frogs over all the extent
 “ of *Egypt*. Hitherto all is equal. But *Aaron*
 “ strikes the dust of the earth, and it was
 “ changed into swarms of gnats [1]; all is co-
 “ vered with them both men and beasts. The
 “ priests of the idol strive to reach the same
 “ pro-

[1] The *French* author follows the *Vulgate* inter-
 preter.

“ prodigy ; their attempt is in vain, they own
 “ the weakness of their art, and say to *Pbarao*,
 “ *It is the finger of God that ails here.* Thereby,
 “ you see it, the supreme Being declares his
 “ power, removes the snare, and fixes the minds
 “ that began to waver. The miracles of *Moses*
 “ were proofs for the true God, and those of
 “ the priests and magicians could not prejudice
 “ his doctrine. They only contributed to make
 “ it still more conspicuous.

“ VI. What then ! Has not JESUS CHRIST
 “ himself forbid believing miracles, says the
 “ objection ? Yes : such and such miracles, but
 “ not all in general, and this is what we must
 “ take care not to confound. He has forbid to
 “ believe the miracles of *false Christs*, that is,
 “ such miracles as might be wrought after him
 “ by such as would dare to boast, that they
 “ were the *Messiah*. He has forbid giving cre-
 “ dit to the miracles of *false prophets*, that is,
 “ such miracles as innovators in doctrine might
 “ work. Lastly, he has forbid crediting the
 “ miracles of *Antichrist*, who is to appear at the
 “ latter end of the world. But in all this you
 “ discover, that God guards you against im-
 “ posture ; he foretels the miracles that are to
 “ support it, and strips them of all credit by a
 “ strict and formal prohibition of believing
 “ them ; a second obligation, with which, I have
 “ said before, God never fails to comply. Mi-
 “ racles have, indeed, a natural and just power
 “ over us ; we are, as it were, under a neces-
 “ sity to submit to his doctrine, who works
 “ them, which moved JESUS CHRIST, speaking
 “ of the *Jews*, to say, *If I had not done among*
 “ *them*

“ them the works which none other man did, they
 “ had not had sin [1]. Consequently it is neces-
 “ sary, that, to support us against such great
 “ authority, either God work miracles superior
 “ to those of the seducers; or that he foretel
 “ their works, which is the greatest of miracles.
 “ But he has done both one and the other;
 “ the first in the strife of the priests of *Pbarao*
 “ against *Moses*; and the second by the predic-
 “ tions of JESUS CHRIST against *false prophets*,
 “ and particularly against *Antichrist*, who is to
 “ appear at the end of the world. Therefore
 “ miracles are a distinctive mark of doctrine;
 “ and the words of JESUS CHRIST are so far
 “ from weakening their evidence, that nothing
 “ can shew their authority more, since it was
 “ necessary to foretel those, which imposture
 “ was to work at a certain time, to take from
 “ them the natural privilege they have of being
 “ signs and proofs of truth.

“ But as it is material to go farther into this
 “ subject, I willingly take the occasion of-
 “ fered from the objection, which I undertake
 “ to refute.

“ There are miracles, which are certain
 “ proofs of truth, and miracles, that are not
 “ certain proofs of truth. If there had never
 “ been any, that accompanied error, we should
 “ be certain without any farther discussion, as
 “ we should have had full certainty on the other
 “ side, if no miracle had ever accompanied
 “ truth. Hence appears the necessity of an in-
 “ fallible mark to discover the difference.

“ Other-

“ Otherwise they would be equivocal, useless,
 “ and of no cogency to determine. But they
 “ are not useless, since they are motives of be-
 “ lief. What then must this rule be? Miracles
 “ are to be distinguished by doctrine. Yes,
 “ miracles are a snare, when they appear in
 “ behalf of falshood, and they are proofs, when
 “ they second known truth. This I demon-
 “ strate.

“ VII. It is impossible, that God should em-
 “ ploy his power, or permit the use of it against
 “ himself. Nothing is more evident. But God
 “ would be the cause of this disorder, if he
 “ wrought or permitted miracles to be wrought
 “ which impugned the known truth: for the
 “ chief end of miracles is to be a testimony
 “ of truth; and truth cannot oppose itself.
 “ Therefore, if God wrought, or permitted mi-
 “ racles against the known truth, these miracles
 “ would turn against him, and his attributes
 “ would act against other attributes, his power
 “ against his veracity, which is visibly absurd.
 “ Therefore it is impossible for God to do
 “ miracles authorizing a manifest lie. There-
 “ fore, these miracles, when such happen, are
 “ either false, or temptations, or the works of
 “ an evil spirit, enemy to God and man. This,
 “ indeed, is that plain rule, but so fertile and
 “ beautiful, which *Moses* gave the *Jews*, in the
 “ place of *Deuteronomy* above quoted. *If a pro-*
 “ *phet arise, &c* [n]. It is clear from this text,
 “ that doctrine must distinguish miracles; and
 “ to judge, whether they are, or are not, from
 “ God,

[n] Deuter. xiii.

“ God, it must be observed, whether what they
 “ authorize be conformable, or contrary, to no-
 “ tions natural or revealed. Do then but survey
 “ all those, which have been wrought out of
 “ the precincts of the Synagogue and the
 “ Church; and you will find, that they intro-
 “ duced, or served to maintain, the plurality
 “ of gods, gross fables, licentiousness of man-
 “ ners, and manifest impieties. These miracles
 “ then were not from God; because they op-
 “ posed the reign of known truth; and men,
 “ using their reason, ought not to credit them.
 “ What then! If doctrine distinguishes mi-
 “ racles, miracles cannot therefore distinguish
 “ doctrine; and it was needless for *Jesus Christ*
 “ to work such abundance in proof of his. No
 “ such thing. Both one and the other is true
 “ without contradiction. It is requisite that
 “ doctrine give weight to miracles, and that
 “ miracles also give weight to doctrine. I am
 “ going to clear up what seems confused in this
 “ proposition.

“ VIII. Miracles are not of themselves infal-
 “ lible proofs of truth, since they sometimes
 “ accompany error, as I have already said. On
 “ the other side, doctrine, when it is extraor-
 “ dinary, could not always suffice to demon-
 “ strate itself. Therefore, to remove all doubts,
 “ two things are requisite. First, that what
 “ is extraordinary in the doctrine, do not con-
 “ tradict the evident knowledge we have. Se-
 “ condly, that what is in the doctrine beyond
 “ evidence, and the known truth, be proved
 “ by miracles. In this case, miracles are justi-
 “ fied

“fied by doctrine, and doctrine justifies mi-
 “racles. These conditions, as is plain, are
 “not opposite to, nor exclusive of each other.
 “On the contrary, they yield a mutual assistance,
 “and their union forms the most illustrious de-
 “monstration of truth. Let us give an in-
 “stance of it.

“IX. The *Jews* had the doctrine of *Moses*,
 “a divine doctrine, and confirmed by innu-
 “merable miracles. This doctrine forbade ex-
 “pressly the belief of prodigies done in testi-
 “mony of a contrary doctrine. It commanded
 “to have recourse to the *Higb Priest* in case of
 “doubt, and to acquiesce to his decision. You
 “would conclude from thence, that the *Jews*
 “were neither to believe *Jesus Christ*, nor his
 “Apostles; but the quite contrary consequence
 “is to be drawn by following this gradation of
 “reasoning. What is it that *Christ* required of
 “them? That they should believe him their
 “*Messiah*. He called himself so. How were
 “they to judge, that he was not an impostor?
 “The Scripture, it is true, imports that in a
 “certain time a great prophet would arise [o],
 “unto whom they should hearken. The text was
 “not so clear, but that it might be mistaken
 “in the explication. To have therefore a right
 “understanding of it, they were to recur to the
 “*Higb-Priest*. But how, you’ll say, could the
 “*Higb-Priest* himself infallibly decide? For
 “after all, *Jesus Christ* might, or might not be,
 “that promised Deliverer. Must he have had
 “recourse to his miracles? Yes. But not to
 “miracles

[o] Deut. xviii. 15, 17, 18.

“ miracles only, since so many had been teen
 “ in behalf of error. Was he to judge by the
 “ doctrine? Yes. But not by the doctrine on-
 “ ly, that being the point in question. To rid
 “ himself of this perplexity, he was to judge of
 “ the doctrine by miracles, and of the miracles
 “ by the doctrine. Now the doctrine of *Jesus*
 “ *Christ* proved that his miracles were of God,
 “ being conformable to that of *Moses*, a doc-
 “ trine also authorized by such great miracles:
 “ and his miracles proved his doctrine, because
 “ they proved the truth of those explanations,
 “ which he gave to the doubtful passages of
 “ the prophets.

“ X. Had *Jesus Christ* wrought miracles
 “ without retaining the divine truths already
 “ received, his mission had been false, his mi-
 “ racles delusive; and had he not wrought
 “ them, what he added over and above the ar-
 “ ticles received had been suspected and desti-
 “ tute of proof. But by supporting, as he has
 “ done, one by the other, he shewed the titles
 “ of his mission in the clearest light, and cut off
 “ all difficulties. And whatever farther objec-
 “ tion could be made must be unjust, and the
 “ effect of obstinate blindness. Accordingly
 “ we find in the gospel these two decisive points
 “ frequently advanced by *Jesus Christ*: one,
 “ that he was not come to destroy, but fulfil
 “ the law; the other, that he wrought miracles,
 “ which none other had done, or could do be-
 “ fore him. Which is manifestly as much as
 “ if he had said: I advance truths which asto-
 “ nish you; but so far from intrenching on
 “ those, which *Moses* taught your Fathers, they
 “ are

“ are an evident explanation of them. More-
 “ over, what appears to you extraordinary in
 “ my doctrine, is sufficiently verified by the
 “ innumerable miracles which you see me do.
 “ The passages of Scripture explained by tra-
 “ dition, convince you that I may be the *Mes-*
 “ *siah*; and this joined to my miracles, ought
 “ effectually to persuade you, that I am indeed,
 “ they being done by me in testimony, that I
 “ am so.

“ XI. What is it then here that deceives
 “ our adversaries? What men inattentive and
 “ prejudiced are wont to be deceived by. They
 “ lay down as a principle, not an error, but one
 “ truth exclusive of another; whilst they are
 “ inseparable, and prove only in company of
 “ each other. Miracles alone may be equivocal;
 “ doctrine only does not always bear testimony
 “ to itself. But to what purpose so greatly
 “ to exaggerate the insufficiency of these
 “ rules of determination taken separately? Is
 “ it said, that one is convincing without the
 “ other? Not at all. So far from it, that we
 “ require they should always be linked together,
 “ and that they borrow their certainty one from
 “ the other. Therefore, to attack us directly, it is
 “ not enough to prove the insufficiency of both
 “ taken separately; it must be proved that a doctrine
 “ may be false, although conformable to the lights,
 “ which, whether natural, or previously revealed,
 “ are otherwise supported by incontestable miracles.
 “ But there is no fear, that a paradox so desti-
 “ tute of proof should ever meet with abet-
 “ tors.

“ XII.

“ XII. Still I hear some of our Infidels subtilizing thus. Your principle, say they, leaves difficulties, nevertheless, which it does not solve. Let us suppose, for example, that a man, the better to insinuate the poison of his doctrine, feigns to adopt the true, and declares for it. This man, in his impious heart, might work miracles; and God, to tempt us, might give him the power, as he will one day to *Antichrist*, as the gospel says. In this supposition, what should we do to guard against an artifice so subtilly disguised? We should examine the doctrine of this new prophet, and should find it conformable to the received doctrine, the impostor industriously accommodating his system to it: But the remaining part of his system, the poison of his error, would be respected by us upon the authority of his prodigies. By this conduct, continues the objection, we should but follow the rule you give us. We should judge of the doctrinal points by the miracles, and of the miracles by the doctrinal points. Nevertheless this so fine a rule would guide us into error the direct way. It is not, therefore, decisive, nor infallible, nor can it be maintained. Apply this, if you please, to *Jesus Christ*, and it will have but the greater force.

“ XIII. *Jesus Christ* has proved his doctrine by miracles. We grant it. But he might feign to approve that of *Moses*, in order to procure a surer entrance for his own into men’s minds. This is customary to all Innovators. They never set out by decrying
“ the

“ the ancient worship; the crowd will not
 “ brook the removal of the ancient bounds :
 “ but under the specious pretext of explaining
 “ the established doctrine, they slip in the new ;
 “ and such is the power of falshood, that then
 “ it easily mixes with the truth, which it retains.
 “ Whence it is natural to conclude, that if mi-
 “ racles are not incontestable proofs of truth,
 “ as has been already owned ; the Christian re-
 “ ligion, which has them only to rest on, abides
 “ without authority, without character and sup-
 “ port. But one word only overthrows all this
 “ *apparatus* of an objection more subtle than
 “ solid. It is a sophism grounded on an im-
 “ possible supposition. It has never happened,
 “ never can happen, that a man, concealing
 “ his evil doctrine under the external confes-
 “ sion of the true, should work miracles to
 “ give sanction to his errors.

“ XIV. Nothing is certain, or this is, that
 “ there is a reciprocal obligation betwixt God
 “ and men. *Reason with me*, says the Lord in the
 “ prophet *Isaiab* ; and in another place : *What*
 “ *could I have done more to my vineyard than I*
 “ *have done in it [p] ?* Men ought to receive
 “ the law, which God imposes on them ; and
 “ God owes to men the not leading them in-
 “ to error. But they would be inevitably led
 “ into it, if he permitted an hypocritical
 “ teacher, confessing the ancient truth, to work
 “ miracles, in order to mix it with falshood.
 “ It is therefore impossible, that this case should
 “ happen ; nor can it be supposed, nor feared,
 “ with-

[p] *Isai. i. 18. Idem v. 4.*

“ without combating the clear notion of a per-
 “ fect being. It is well known, that God can
 “ tempt us, either for the proof of our hearts,
 “ or to give the merit of constancy to our
 “ faith. But *to tempt*, and *induce into error*, as
 “ we have said, are two very different things,
 “ which we must be careful not to confound.
 “ *To tempt*, is to present, or not to remove, the
 “ occasion and allurements, which solicit, but
 “ do not necessitate; and this is not against the
 “ idea of a wise being. *To induce into error*, is
 “ not barely soliciting; it is constraining, and
 “ preparing an infallible and necessary deter-
 “ mination to falshood. But this, I repeat it,
 “ is what God cannot do, though it is what he
 “ would do, if the supposed case ever could be
 “ realized.

XV. “ In vain is it said, that *Antichrist* at the
 “ end of the world will be impowered to do pro-
 “ digies. This example, which decides the pos-
 “ sibility of miracles favourable to error, does
 “ not decide the possibility of miracles autho-
 “ rizing a lie hid under the exterior profession
 “ of sound doctrine; and it is surprising, that
 “ so palpable a mistake is not perceived. To
 “ place it in full evidence, there needs no more
 “ than to remark the prodigious distance, which
 “ separates these two suppositions; that of a
 “ man, who was not for God, and should say
 “ he was; and that of a man who feigned he
 “ was for God, though really against him. It
 “ is beyond doubt, that the first might per-
 “ chance do prodigies, and it is equally cer-
 “ tain, that the latter could do none. And
 “ why? Because the first could seduce those
 M “ only,

“ only, who would be seduced, those, who
 “ would follow but half the rule, and judge by
 “ miracles only, without regard to doctrine.
 “ But the last would seduce even those, who,
 “ with a scrupulous fidelity, followed the rule
 “ in its whole extent. They would have against
 “ them, at the same time, both the authority
 “ of miracles, and the external profession of
 “ sound doctrine. Men, who dive not into the
 “ recess of one another’s hearts, would be igno-
 “ rant how to disengage themselves from so
 “ subtle a snare; and God leading them into
 “ it by the interposition of his power, mani-
 “ fested in prodigies, would be alone account-
 “ able for their errors. But this being impos-
 “ sible, it is therefore demonstratively true,
 “ that the hypothesis of an hypocrite, who not
 “ designing to maintain the truth, should do
 “ prodigies to propagate his lies, is an absolute-
 “ ly contradictory and chimerical hypothesis.

XVI. “ After this, what remains to be done,
 “ but to conclude, that the miracles of *Jesus*
 “ *Christ* have all the characters of proof in the
 “ extremeſt rigour. And well may they have
 “ it, ſince, to weaken the force of them, this
 “ ſuppoſition muſt be made, that, perhaps, he
 “ did not believe in his heart the doctrine of
 “ *Moses*. A weak and miſerable reſource, which
 “ I grieve to ſee embraced by the unbeliever.
 “ You, who dare be ſo preſumptuous, what
 “ grounds do you build upon? If it be a con-
 “ jecture founded on poſitive facts, produce
 “ them, and we will be ſilent. But if it be a
 “ ſubtility, a ſhift, or quibble of diſpute, I put
 “ this query: Is it becoming to object ſuch
 “ trifles

“ trifles in the most important and serious of
“ all questions?

XVII. “ I go still farther (God forgive me
“ this excess of speech) and allow you, that
“ effectually *Jesus Christ* might not have be-
“ lieved the doctrine of *Moses*; and that his
“ conduct, his discourses on this head, were
“ one continual series of dissimulation. Even
“ in this hypothesis you would be overcome.
“ How? Because you must allow at least, that
“ it was not manifest, that he disbelieved *Mo-
ses*’ doctrine. According to you, it was a
“ secret hid *perchance* in his heart, and the Jews
“ could not penetrate it. Mean while he wrought
“ miracles, and those miracles were more il-
“ lustrious, than this suspicion of his infidelity
“ was solid. Therefore the Jews were bound
“ to believe *Jesus Christ*; and if they had been
“ deceived in this submission conformable to
“ the rule, God himself would have led them
“ into error. Odious conclusion, which neither
“ you nor I can hear without scandal!

XVIII. “ I am not ignorant of the objection,
“ which certain Philosophers make against the
“ miracles of *Jesus Christ*, which I hold myself
“ obliged to produce. They agree to the truth
“ and sincerity of the Gospel-narrations, and
“ own, that the God of the Christians cured the
“ sick, and raised the dead. Here the faith of
“ history prevails over prejudice. But they deny
“ that those facts, however illustrious, deserve
“ the title of true miracles in the full rigour of
“ this term; and this is the argument which
“ they continually repeat.

XIX. " It can not be said that a fact is
 " a true miracle, altho' superior to human
 " power, whilst one may suppose it is produced
 " by a being superior to man, and yet inferior
 " to God. But nothing hinders us from be-
 " lieving, that *Jesus Christ* wrought so many
 " signs on earth and in heaven only by the in-
 " terposition of such a substance as we have just
 " described : Consequently nothing obliges us to
 " look on these signs as unquestionable miracles.
 " Which of these propositions, these Philoso-
 " phers urge, will you attack ? It can not be
 " the first. It is evident that a miracle, in its
 " correct notion, is an effect improductible by
 " any finite power. To rank it in the mira-
 " culous order, it is not sufficient to find that
 " it is above our power ; it is farther necessary
 " that we know it to be possible only to that
 " Being which is infinite in power. But who
 " can be sure that an effect, however prodigi-
 " gious it is supposed, is the immediate and
 " infallible production of God ? May not we
 " imagine betwixt him and us innumerable
 " substances unequal in perfection, and say that
 " the most noble can do what seems marvelous
 " to the less perfect ; and those, by a parity of
 " reason, produce effects which would seem
 " prodigious to those that are subordinate to
 " them ? A common instance even gives this a
 " semblance of truth. Animals, which in an
 " inferior rank, are the next beings to us, must,
 " if they have the understanding which their
 " actions indicate, look on ours as so many
 " prodigies. What is natural to us, is to them
 " miraculous ; and if there were thinking beings
 " infe-

“ inferior to them, they might *perchance* afford
 “ to this new species, the same motives of ad-
 “ miration, as they receive from us.

XX. “ Will you attack the proposition
 “ which supposes a real gradation of substances
 “ situated between the Supreme Being and
 “ men? But this hypothesis is supported by
 “ the Philosophers of all times. What need of
 “ mentioning the ancient schools? It is the
 “ sense of all Christians. There is not one
 “ amongst you, that does not acknowledge an-
 “ gels of light and darkness, good and bad
 “ angels. It is an article of your faith, that
 “ those intelligences can act in you, and on
 “ you; dispose of matter, as they please; give
 “ to its parts a thousand motions, a thousand
 “ different forms; and shew themselves under
 “ innumerable metamorphoses. What is far-
 “ ther wanting for the production of what
 “ seems miraculous to us? This system is au-
 “ thorized in the Church by facts, which she
 “ believes indubitable. For example, the Py-
 “ thonefs made the Prophet *Samuel* appear, af-
 “ ter his death, to *Saul*. And how did she
 “ work this apparent miracle: but by the
 “ means of an aiding genius? Thus again, the
 “ magicians of *Pharao*, how did they perform
 “ the same prodigies that *Aaron* and *Moses* did
 “ in *Ægypt*? Was it not by the assistance of
 “ these Demons, the belief of which was already
 “ diffused over the world? Spirits then can
 “ perform what we call miracles, and if so, why
 “ might they not have done all that the Gospel
 “ and other histories relate of prodigies?

XXI. “ The resurrection of *Samuel*, you will
 “ say, was only an appearance, a phantom void
 “ of reality, a vain spectre, no sooner present
 “ than vanished : You will add, that *Pbarao*’s
 “ magicians were confounded by *Moses*, and
 “ that the weakness of the genius which acted
 “ in, or for them, appeared manifest in the
 “ production of insects which they could not
 “ attain to. An answer, these Philosophers go
 “ on, as vain as it is trivial. It is true, the
 “ magicians of *Ægypt* found the limits of their
 “ power in the frustration of their efforts to
 “ equal the works of *Moses*. But what is to be
 “ concluded from this want of power ? That
 “ the hand of God was more with *Moses* than
 “ with *Pbarao*’s priests ? Not so. What then ?
 “ That the *Ægyptian* magicians had a Demon,
 “ that *Moses* had his also, and that this was of
 “ an order superior to that which seconded
 “ the first, In a word, this is the intire solu-
 “ tion, and there is no need of seeking farther.
 “ Thus, neither *Moses*, nor the magicians,
 “ wrought miracles ; and to return to *Jesus*
 “ *Cbrist*, if he shewed works before unknown
 “ in the Universe, it was because the genius
 “ whose assistance he experienced, was more
 “ powerful and noble even than that of *Moses*.
 “ By consequence, neither one nor the other
 “ were authors of true miracles ; they only
 “ exhibited the spectacle of some unheard of
 “ wonders, each one according to the power of
 “ the genius which protected him.

XXII. “ If this objection be solid, we see
 “ Philosophers invested with the priviledge of
 “ Poets. No more need of being scrupulously
 “ attached

“ attached to clear ideas. An ingenious fiction
 “ is all-sufficient, and the supreme art consists
 “ in delivering a sublime chimera in the grave
 “ tone of an argument, instead of accompa-
 “ nying it with the smiling grace of a fable.
 “ But let us not forestall this remark to which
 “ my answer naturally leads. I begin by
 “ granting that these spiritual substances, men-
 “ tioned in the difficulty, can produce ef-
 “ fects beyond our power. What restriction
 “ soever is requisite to be made here, I put
 “ none to my concession. But does it follow
 “ from hence, that no prodigy is above us, or
 “ those powers? Is it not evident on the con-
 “ trary, that he, who has created us all, can do,
 “ when he pleases, what none else can do? No
 “ man will contest this pre-eminence of power
 “ in the infinite Being: By consequence the
 “ question consists in this only, whether the
 “ *marvelous* in the works of *Jesus Christ*, could
 “ be the operation of a limited being, altho’
 “ superior to man; or whether the interven-
 “ tion of a divine power, was necessary in his
 “ miracles. The last is what we maintain,
 “ grounded on the immoveable foundation of
 “ this reasoning which has so often served to
 “ destroy what has been opposed against us.

XXIII. “ God is wise; he can not act against
 “ himself. God is just; he can not lay an in-
 “ evitable snare to men, nor permit the infal-
 “ lible victory of error over them. All which
 “ nevertheless would have happened, if *Jesus*
 “ *Christ* working miracles *in the name of God*,
 “ had wrought them by the assistance only of a
 “ superior genius by whom he was guided. In

“ this case, God would be no longer just. He
 “ would manifestly have rewarded fraud. He
 “ would have permitted, (it must be uttered,)
 “ he would have willed, that *his name* should
 “ serve as a pretext to falsehood. In this case,
 “ he would have acted against himself; he
 “ would have authorized imposture by toler-
 “ rating it; he would have left a power in his
 “ creature, which it would have turned against
 “ its Author, and creation would have been the
 “ limit of his power over it. In this case, he
 “ would have deprived himself of the external
 “ means to make truth discernible from false-
 “ hood. The empire of nature being parcelled
 “ out amongst an infinite number of such
 “ powers, the whole world would be but the
 “ theatre of their delusions; and amidst so
 “ many Lords, we should be no longer able to
 “ distinguish the true, reduced to the odious
 “ alternative of *Atheism* or *Idolatry*. What a
 “ system?

XXIV. “ But let us go deeper, and to the
 “ bottom of it. I ask what nature this genius
 “ was of, which presided over the works of *Je-
 “ sus Christ*? Was it an evil being? Was it a
 “ beneficent intelligence? If an evil being,
 “ enemy to God and men, see what an abyss
 “ of contradictions you are cast into. You
 “ make a spirit, evil by its nature, the inspirer
 “ of the greatest virtues. You make him teach
 “ a morality more holy, more pure, more
 “ sublime than that of all the Philosophers.
 “ He destroys the senseless as well as profane
 “ worship of Polytheism, and purifies even the
 “ Jewish religion already so holy in the spirit
 “ of

“ of its laws. What all the wisdom of the
 “ wise could not do in the course of so many
 “ ages, he alone does by *Jesus Christ*. He ren-
 “ ders men equitable, humble, veracious, mo-
 “ derate, chaste, patient, and imputes guilt to
 “ the contrary dispositions. Thus you make
 “ him fight against himself, and act directly in
 “ opposition to his natural bent. He loves
 “ evil, and does good; he precipitates into er-
 “ ror, and teaches truth; he seeks to hurt, and
 “ makes those happy, who practise his lessons
 “ with fidelity. And indeed this is no other
 “ than the invincible argument, which *Jesus*
 “ *Christ* employed against the Jews in an hy-
 “ pothesis almost like yours; and we only re-
 “ peat here the same words: *How can Satan*
 “ *cast out Satan, and thus divide his own king-*
 “ *dom* [q].

XXV. “ Add farther, that this system is
 “ visibly fraught with all the extravagancies of
 “ *Manicheism*. For what can resemble more the
 “ *double spirit*, than the existence of a being
 “ which does prodigies wherein God has no
 “ share; disposes of nature as his own pro-
 “ perty; combats against the Creator of the
 “ Universe, by making a man do prodigies,
 “ who calls himself the Minister of the Eternal,
 “ when he is not sent by him? Is it, because
 “ God could not oppose himself against the
 “ power of this being, or because he would
 “ not? What ever side you take, manifests the
 “ weakness of your cause. If the first, then
 “ deny, you Deists, whom I combat, the Being
 “ infinite

[q] Matth. xii. Mark iii.

“ infinite in every respect, which evidence has
 “ forced you to acknowledge. If the last, then
 “ debase your homage so far as to say, that
 “ you do it to him, who neither loves truth,
 “ which he leaves without defence [r], nor
 “ men, whom he leaves without resource against
 “ the efforts of illusion.

XXVI. “ Will you then confine yourself to
 “ maintain, that an Intelligence well affected to
 “ God and men, operated *in Jesus Christ*, and
 “ *by Jesus Christ*, the numerous miracles which
 “ history reports of him? To what are you re-
 “ duced? You must then say one of these two
 “ things: Either that God approved the mi-
 “ racles done by a beneficent and just Intelli-
 “ gence, who in this did but conform himself
 “ to the known intentions of the perfect Being,
 “ and then you fall into the assent, which you
 “ seek to shun: or, that this Principle, altho’
 “ good and holy, acted independently of the
 “ divine will; which is the height of contra-
 “ diction, there being no justice nor sanctity,
 “ but in a perfect obedience to the designs of
 “ God. Observe moreover, that *Jesus Christ*,
 “ working so many and diverse miracles,
 “ wrought them only *in the name of God*. If
 “ then they had been only the effect of another
 “ good and wise power, altho’ finite, this other
 “ Principle would have authorized by his action

“ an
 [r] See *James Serces’s* treatise of miracles, and Dr.
Hoadley, Bp. of Worcester, in his dispute on the same
 subject, against Dr. *Fleetwood*, since Bp. of Ely.

See the distinctive characters of true miracles by M.
De Verensels.

“ an odious lie. He would have attributed to
 “ God, the work which was not of God. He
 “ would therefore have favoured imposture;
 “ and would have become himself the principal
 “ cause of seduction. It is yours to shew the
 “ compatibility of this deceitful and impious
 “ conduct with the notion of a just and holy
 “ Intelligence.

XXVII. “ I have said above, that if *Jesus*
 “ *Christ* wrought his marvelous works by the
 “ assistance only of a genius, by which he is
 “ supposed to have been protected, God would
 “ be deprived of the external means of making
 “ falshood discernible from truth. This re-
 “ mark deserves by its importance to be con-
 “ sidered again, that it may be better illustrated.
 “ It must be owned, in effect, that God can
 “ will to work miracles, in what sense soever
 “ you take this term. Let us suppose then,
 “ for a moment, that he designs to exhibit
 “ them to view, in order to manifest his will,
 “ and render them incontestable to us. What
 “ shall he do? I ask you. He shall raise tem-
 “ pests, or shall calm them; he shall give
 “ strength and health to the sick; he shall mul-
 “ tiply beings, &c. But, we, by what marks
 “ are we to judge, that these prodigies are from
 “ God? Answer. Is it because they are vi-
 “ sibly above human power? But your inter-
 “ mediate substances can do, you say, what we
 “ can not. This sign is then equivocal. Is it
 “ because these miracles are for the benefit of
 “ men? But your substances are not all evil;
 “ there are some for us that are tutelary, and
 “ inclined to good, as others are to evil. Those,
 “ for

“ for example, which seconded *Moses, Jesus*
 “ *Christ*, and Saint *Paul*, were all beneficent.
 “ This character therefore is not as yet dis-
 “ tinctive. Is it infine because these prodigies
 “ are above natural causes *known to us*? But
 “ do we know better, what relation there may
 “ be between the works of your subaltern
 “ powers, and the general decrees established
 “ for the government of the Universe? Your
 “ system then reduces the Being, Infinite in
 “ power, to the sad impossibility of doing any
 “ miracles, which may not be confounded with
 “ the works of his creatures. He can do every
 “ thing, according to yourselves, and yet in
 “ rigour, he can do nothing; for in reality, it
 “ is inability to do any thing, the being in such
 “ a state of impotence that he cannot impress,
 “ on his own work, the distinctive seal of its
 “ Author; it is no power at all *that* of work-
 “ ing a miracle, which cannot answer the effect
 “ for which it was wrought. But every system
 “ which sets limits to a Being that has none,
 “ is a false system. Judge then, what name
 “ yours deserves.

XXVIII. “ Let us conclude. I pretend, that
 “ amongst the miracles of *Jesus Christ*, there
 “ are some of a species so visibly supernatural,
 “ that the Infinite Being only can be the Author
 “ of them. For example, the resurrection of
 “ the dead cannot be the work of a limited
 “ substance. Though I should grant, that it
 “ can dispose of the motions of matter, resolve
 “ its particles, and configure them at plea-
 “ sure, because Intelligences, in their order, are
 “ truly superior to bodies in theirs; yet this
 “ power,

“ power, as great as it is, would be infinitely
“ too weak for the miracle of a resurrection.
“ Do you ask why? 'Tis because human life
“ does not consist only in playing the springs
“ of the corporeal substance: it is moreover
“ necessary, that the soul, which was separated,
“ be reunited to it; it is necessary, that those
“ two beings, so dissimilar, recommence to af-
“ fect each other reciprocally in their wonted
“ manner after the interruption of their first
“ concord. Now I make hereon this decisive
“ remark.

XXIX. “ If there be a power, which has
“ ever reunited the two natures, the soul and
“ body, after their separation; this power must
“ be superior to both natures. It must have
“ an absolute and equal empire over both;
“ contain in itself the perfection of each of
“ them; be able by the sole efficacy of its will,
“ to subject them to the mutual correspondence
“ of the motions of the body with the thoughts
“ of the soul, and the thoughts of the soul with
“ the motions of the body; in fine, compre-
“ hend eminently within itself the universali-
“ ty of being, that is, universal perfection in
“ all kind. For here the reproduction of union
“ is a sort of second creation; and none but
“ the hand, which first knew how to unite the
“ two substances, knows the secret of reuniting
“ them. Now this Intelligence subordinate to
“ God, and elevated as much as you please
“ above man, is not infinite; it possesses not
“ the sovereign power, which is in the Creator
“ only, over his creature; it has not eminently
“ all the real perfection of spirits and bodies;
“ it

“ it has not the supreme empire over these two
 “ natures, so far as to have it in its power to
 “ communicate this empire to one of these two
 “ natures over the other, in order to form the
 “ union which composes man. Therefore it
 “ cannot re-establish this union, when this
 “ union has ceased. Therefore it cannot be
 “ the efficient cause of a true resurrection; and
 “ there is none but the Infinite, the Perfect
 “ Being, who can be the Author of it.

XXX. “ Do not say, that this answer de-
 “ rives its whole strength from the supposition,
 “ that what thinks in us, is different from the
 “ body. Though even, to avoid dispute, I
 “ should let it pass, that there is not a double
 “ nature in man, my argument would still
 “ have the same force, and the proof is easy.
 “ The corporeal substance of man disordered
 “ by death, thinks no longer, and man by re-
 “ surrection begins again to think. It is there-
 “ fore necessary, that the being which restores
 “ its life, should restore its thought; that is,
 “ should make a material substance pass from
 “ no thought to thought. But this creation
 “ of thought in an inanimated mass, blind
 “ and insensible, is without doubt an almighty
 “ action. It implies a Creator. If not a Crea-
 “ tor of the first degree of being, or a mass of
 “ matter, at least, a Creator of the second de-
 “ gree of being, much superior to it; to wit,
 “ that of a thinking being. But how can he
 “ be [s] a Creator of the superior degree of
 “ being,

[s] See M. *Fenelon* ABp. of Cambray's Letter on the Deity and Religion.

“ being, if he be not of the inferior? How
 “ can a vile and inanimated mass receive from
 “ this Creator so high a perfection, if it de-
 “ pends not from him for its whole being?
 “ How can the most noble degree of being,
 “ which is to perceive, to judge, and to will freely,
 “ depend on him; insomuch, that he can create
 “ it, and restore it to substances which have
 “ lost it, unless the lowest degree of being, to
 “ wit, that of an inanimated mass, depend on
 “ his power? Certainly these notions are self-
 “ contradictory. None therefore but he who
 “ possesses an absolute power by creation over
 “ the body of man, can restore him thought by
 “ resuscitation. However, this subaltern and
 “ finite Intelligence, whatever it be, which you
 “ imagine, has not created, nor could create
 “ the body of man: it cannot therefore res-
 “ suscitate it; since by resuscitating it, it would
 “ restore it thought, and this present would be
 “ a more powerful action, than even the crea-
 “ tion of the body. This prodigy, which all
 “ the substances invented by you could not
 “ execute, has nevertheless been effected by
 “ *Jesus Christ*. He has raised the dead from
 “ the grave, and they have lived. He has
 “ therefore wrought true miracles in the most
 “ rigorous precision of the term, and the hand
 “ of God was with him.” Thus far this learned
 Author, who letting the Deists’ objections pass,
 deduces a manifest contradiction from the ob-
 jections compared with the principles, which
 they themselves necessarily admit.

XXXI. Hitherto with the light of reason
 and religion we have gone through a maze of
 various

various fallacies, by which the opposers of Church-miracles have endeavoured to perplex the cause, and to obscure the truth. Reason alone discovers the character of falshood impressed on all miracles, which Heathenism or Heresy pretends. And the same reason assisted by faith ascertains the distinctive marks of true miracles equally impugned by every error of any denomination, because equally fatal to them all. Before *Prophecy* another important characteristic of divine miracles is produced, it will be proper to speak first of human testimony, on the credit of which Church-miracles rest, and which all these systems reject or admit as it serves the turn of the Authors. However they may be found to disagree on other heads, this method of proof is handled with the same freedom by a *Hume*, a *Woolston*, a *Chubb*, a *Morgan*, a *Spinoza*, who, Mr. *Brooke* assures us, [1] have publicly and pertinaciously maintained, that there is and always will remain a just presumption against the truth of miraculous operations; which is as much as to say in other words, that no credibility of witnesses is able to establish such extraordinary facts to the satisfaction of a rational inquirer. The Doctor himself speaking of the dæmoniackal *præstigiæ*, witchcraft and delusion, says, that NO HUMAN TESTIMONY CAN SUPPORT THEM [u], and in the same manner rejects all divine miracles wrought in the Church after the term he has fixed for their cessation. How consistently, the Doctor may at leisure consider with himself;

[1] Examination of the free Inquiry p. 3.

[u] Ch. III. §. 25.

himself; and he will oblige the public by communicating upon what certain grounds and authority, what clear foundation in Scripture he has given the word of command, that miracles shall come so far and no farther, than the time of a Chrysostome. *For somewhere between the time of Origen and the time of Chrysostome, the extraordinary Providence, which appeared in defence and support of the Christian Religion through the earlier ages of the Church (he does not say with respect to certain particular miracles, but he maintains it with respect to all) was actually withdrawn [x].*

CHAP. VI.

I. **W**E must rely on human testimony for the knowledge of facts, which naturally are the object of sense, but which distance or place has withdrawn from our observation. That testimony has a persuasive power, or force of argument, needs no proof; because every one who attests, intends to be believed. Its power lies in the speaker's knowing what he says, and saying what he knows. If both, or either of these, is known to be wanting, the speaker has no power of persuasion; his testimony goes for nothing, the hearer minds not what he says. If on the contrary the character of the speaker grounds a *probability* of his saying, the hearer has the like grounds for a *probable* assent: And if there is a *certainty*, that he

neither

[x] pag. 266.

neither is deceived himself, nor will deceive; his testimony produces *certainty*.

II A single testimony seldom rises higher than a *probable* proof: the testimony of numbers often begets *certainty*, even as full conviction as a mathematical demonstration. Who is there that doubts, or can doubt of a *China*, a *Mexico*, a *Cæsar*, a *Pompey*, of innumerable facts, both past and present, of which his own senses have given him no information, none but upon the testimony of others? It were losing time to prove what the whole world assents to as firmly as to a first principle; and which is a sure ground of human actions, which has never failed in one single instance.

III. But these assertions, thus universally agreed to in their general meaning, and import, meet with an exception from sectarists, as to *religious facts*. These declared enemies to the great successive body of the faithful, the *Catholic* Church, are no friends to human testimony, which cannot be construed to justify their unnatural separation. If it would move the pity of an impartial Philosopher to hear these men pronounce with an air of confidence and importance, that in Ecclesiastical matters neither the number, nor the authority of witnesses can add any weight to their most solemn asseverations, it must certainly raise the indignation of a Christian to see them support this *paradox* by a text drawn from the fountain of eternal truth. Because according to the holy Writ *all men are liars*, therefore, according to these Logicians, not only each particular may err, may either deceive others, or be himself deceived; but

but the whole collective body of mankind may combine in the propagation of falshood in contradiction to the known truth. Tho' I shall have a more proper occasion hereafter to consider this subject, I can't help observing here, that, if it were morally possible for men in their senses thus to degrade and insult human nature by seriously believing the misconstruction of the Text, they have at least taken a very improper method of conveying any degree of conviction to others. For what credit can be given to a set of men, who openly explode all human testimony, and declare, that no man must be believed?

IV. Tho' human testimony may prove the truth of *natural* facts, must we grant, that it is also a proof of *supernatural*? Is there not a just exception or prejudice against any testimony for miracles? We have seen this expressly asserted by Dr. Middleton [a], and he has *Atheists* and *Deists* to keep him company. In opposition to whom, I bring first the whole world besides. What numbers of miracles were *related* and *believed* by worshippers of the true God, from the creation down to *Christ*? All these, both the *relaters* and *believers*, judged testimony had power to render them *credible*: the first, because otherwise their relating them was evidently unreasonable and foolish: the second, because it is a flat contradiction to believe upon *testimony*, and to judge that *testimony* cannot work *belief*. As to the Heathen world, who can question either

[a] See Chap. iii. num. 23.

either their *relating* or *believing* miracles? Every school boy knows they did. Here then my argument returns, and shews demonstratively, that they also took *miracles* to be proveable by *testimony*.

V. Do we find the general sense of mankind different in following ages? No, we certainly do not. As to Christians, from *Cbrist* to the present age, there has been room to charge *particulars* in several instances, with believing miracles on too weak a testimony: But that no testimony was sufficient to ground a rational belief of miracles, is contrary to the general sense and general persuasion of Christians of every denomination. In this there is no difference between Catholics and Protestants. The sense of the other part of mankind co existing with Christianity, is no less evident. We see what a great part of the world, according to *Cbrist's* and the ancient prophecies, is brought over to *Christianity*, *i. e.* to the belief of *Cbrist's* doctrine and *miracles*. Did they believe merely upon testimony? or upon testimony confirmed by miracles? If the first, we have our intent: if the second, still these miracles were seen by few comparatively, and the great body of converted nations knew them only upon report of eye-witnesses. Therefore they believed the testimony of these eye-witnesses: therefore they made no question, but *testimony* could render *miracles* credible.

VI. As for those, who remained unbelievers, their greatest champions and greatest enemies of *Christianity*, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, &c. like the obdurate Jews, they owned *Cbrist's* miracles, upon

upon the strength of testimony; and sought to evade the force of them by ascribing them to the *Devil*; which evasion itself demonstrates their sense, that *miracles*, as facts, are proveable by testimony.

What is a *Middleton*, a *Hume*, this handful of enemies to *miracles*, and to the *credibility* of miracles, to the whole world past and present? Nothing, as to number; and as little in every other respect. What reasons are to be expected from them, which never were thought on by any body besides; or if thought on, were despised?

VII. Whether miracles can have a sufficient credit through testimony, or not, is no indifferent, immaterial, speculative question; on the contrary, it is most interesting, and a question, on which depends the regulation of our actions in the greatest, or rather, the only concern of life, the prosecution of the end of our being. For, if they cannot, mankind in general is left without any farther manifestation of the *Divine Will* but the creation; the only one, which stands exposed to the senses of every one. Whether, therefore, *miracles* have been wrought, and whether, if wrought, testimony can make them *credible*, is a point of the greatest importance, and consequently, if both have the consent of mankind, this consent must be rational, and not lightly taken up, but upon due consideration: And such a consent is so strong an argument of truth, as leaves no probability of the contrary.

VIII. Secondly, if the existence of *miracles* is not *credible*, I ask, why not? Are they *impossible*?

sible? Is there a cause that has power to produce such effects? Are they out of the reach of Omnipotence? Do *miracles* imply a contradiction? Do they contradict any *Divine Attributes*? Let this be made appear; or, if it cannot, as most certainly it cannot, has the ALMIGHTY tied his own hands, has He subjected himself by a law of his own making, never to work a *miracle*, and made this law known to mankind, or, if not to mankind, to a Privy Council of Infidels, to a *Middleton*?

IX. If it were the height of folly and madness to assert this, then it is evident God may please to work miracles, and he can work them with the same facility as he created the Universe, or any part of it; and with the same ease, can interrupt or change the ordinary course of things, as he put them in such a course at the first beginning. He can destroy his own work, because every thing, that is not self-existent, holds its duration or preservation, as well as first existence, at the good-will and pleasure of the *Creator*. Nothing has a necessary existence in time, but what has a necessary existence from eternity.

X. If miracles have no *intrinsecal* or *antecedent* impossibility, nor any *extrinsecal* or *consequent*, from the decrees of God never to work any; it is plain, that there can be no *positive* reason to deny their existence, but a *negative* only: *i. e.* that they don't appear, either in *themselves*; or in their *effects*. And this *negative* is removed as to those, who *see* them: And also as to those, who *bear* them *witnessed* by good testimony; because this testimony is the *effect* of
of

of their having been *seen*, or been the object of sense. In which there is no difference to be shewn between our assent to *testimony of miracles*, and to the testimony of other contingent *natural events*. These we often *see*: But we *assent* to, or believe innumerable more, that we never have seen. This *assent*, this *belief* must have a reason or motive, and what other is there frequently, but testimony? and this we look upon as the *mediate effect* of such events having actually existed as reported. For, if we can assign a satisfactory reason, that this testimony did not presuppose the reality of the event; *i. e.* did not come *mediately* or *immediately* from eye-witnesses, whose *seeing* those events can have no other *cause*, than the events existing; the testimony goes for nothing, because not looked upon as the *effect* of such events really existing.

The same is to be said in regard to the testimony of miracles, which is only *credible*, when reasonably looked upon as the *effect* of miracles: But when a just exception lies against the testimony (as it may, and often does against testimony of non-miraculous facts) then such testimony does not appear to be the *effect* of miracles, but of fraud or mistake; and so does not appear a reasonable proof of a miracle.

XI. But as all testimony of natural events is not exceptionable; in like manner, the testimony of miracles may be of such a character as not reasonably to be rejected; nay evidently prove the existence of the miracles attested. Such, for example, is the testimony of those innumerable witnesses, who saw *Moses's* miracles.

It is impossible, that any other cause than those miracles, should produce such a testimony. Whence the *bearers* of it from the mouths of such a number of *seers*, were made as certain of those miracles, as if themselves had seen them. Nor these first *bearers* only: but the *bearers* at second hand; and so on from hand to hand, by a succession of testimony, even to the end of the world. Wonders, or miracles, the greater they are, require a stronger testimony. But whatever can come under the observation of our senses, may be witnessed, and by such numbers, and of such character, as not only to remove all doubt, but even all power of reasonably doubting; as in the example just brought.

XII. Dr. Middleton boldly advances, *that the credibility of witnesses cannot be infallibly known*. Which is as much as to say, that all testimony is fallible; *i. e.* all testimony may deceive us, and prove false. Strange scepticism! which, if it is the language of his mind, does no honour to his reason. But I rather imagine, he intended it merely for his present purpose, and to discredit miracles only: and not to be levelled against all testimony whatever. For surely there are innumerable facts, which he would be ashamed to say he doubted of, or that he might *perhaps* be mistaken in, for which nevertheless he trusts to testimony. Would he say, *perhaps* there was no *Alexander*, no *Cesar*; *perhaps*, no *China*, *Mexico*? a fool or madman may speak so, but no man in his senses.

Would he go on, and say, *perhaps* no *Christ*, no *miracles* wrought by him: no *Christianity* raised

raised by him and his *Apostles*, on a secure and divine foundation : no means left, no sufficient security provided by Almighty God to keep it up to the end of the world, and to spread it all the world over ? What a Christian ! Or would he say, that *perhaps* CHRIST was an impostor, as well as *Mahomet* ; the *Apostles* cheats, their doctrines human inventions, their *signs* and *wonders* forgery and lies ; just as he treats those of all the succeeding ages of the Church ? Is this his Christianity ?

XIII. CHRIST the Divine Founder built his Church upon foundations more immoveable than heaven and earth ; and the Church equally secure and immoveable with the foundations. Saint *Paul* commands his converts to receive Christianity, as the word of God : consequently without any fear or apprehension of *possibly* being deceived ; with such an immoveable steadiness and adhesion, as even to reject an Angel from heaven, should he oppose it : By which strong expression he shewed the absolute *certainty* of it. He therefore had given them this *certainty*. And this firmness in the belief of Christian doctrine is the duty of all succeeding Christians. Therefore the grounds, the proofs of Christianity, the foundations of it, descend through all succeeding ages, to support this firmness, this steadiness of their faith. Therefore the testimony, which brings down *Christianity* and the grounds of it, brings them securely and *certainly* : Therefore the *credibility* of *witnesses* can be and is, in the case of *Christianity*, as well as in many others, *infallibly known*. For certainty is infallibility.

XIV. I

XIV. I might add, and easily prove it, that the witnesses of *Christianity* are far more credible than all others, who nevertheless give certainty to what they attest. The pre-eminence of their testimony arises from their superior character, the infinite importance of the facts they witness; their obligation of conveying what they had *seen* and *heard*, not once or twice, but thousands of times, and so rendered most familiar to their senses; their obligation not to *add* or take away, *jota unum*, the least *tittle*; their horror of lying instilled into them by *Christ* and his Apostles; their great zeal and holiness, which made them suffer every thing, not only with patience, but with joy, for the love of *Christ* and his doctrine; their renouncing the world and every human comfort to follow, in poverty and self-denial, the example and cross of *Christ*; their great numbers of spiritual Superiors, Bishops and Pastors, set apart to watch over the flock, and keep them firm in the faith first taught, and in the practice of its holy rules prescribed for our conduct, with authority to punish delinquents, most especially such as attempted innovations in faith, so as to cut them off from *Christ's* body the Church, if not soon reclaimed. These, and other considerations which might be offered, shew to an impartial considerer, what a superiority Christian testimony hath above all other; and consequently how much more it is removed from uncertainty.

XV. From what has been said, it appears, that testimony can give certainty; and this not only in common facts, but equally in *religious* and in *miraculous*: Because in all equally the

the characters of the witnesses may be such as to make it a madness to suspect them, either of being deceived, or intending to deceive: Or, which comes to the same, because, with respect to all these facts, testimony may equally be so circumstanced, as not possibly to be the effect of mistake or fraud, but of certain knowledge only.

XVI. And in such cases, to object the *improbability*, the *ridiculousness*, the *impossibility* of the facts attested, is pretending to prove certainty to be an error. Tho' there are degrees in certainty as in light, and Almighty God sees truth infinitely clearer than any creature; and one created understanding, clearer than another: Yet all certainties are on the same side, & none contradicts another. So these testimonies that force our assent, never witness *impossibilities*, nor things *ridiculous* in themselves, nor *improbabilities*, nor can any fact be judged *impossible*, *ridiculous* in itself or *improbable* consequently to such testimony. Abstracting from this testimony, or antecedently to the application of it, a fact may seem *impossible*, and excusably, for this obvious reason: because there are an infinity of facts *possible*, which not only the best human understanding, but that of an angel would judge *impossible*; God only being sufficient to comprehend *omne possibile*. So, before God gave us better tidings, we should have looked upon those things *ridiculous* and contrary to reason, which nevertheless are the *height of the wisdom and goodness of God*.

Christianity, in its most important truths, is this *wisdom and goodness of God*, tho' *folly and*
ridicu-

ridiculous to bare human reason. And what improbabilities does the Old and New Testament testify to us; the testimony whereof destroys their *improbability*, and makes them *certainities*?

XVII. Therefore to such objections as these against the credibility of testimony, the answer is, to mind the objectors of their ignorance of what is, or is not *possible, improbable* or *ridiculous*: and that they invert the order of right reasoning, in concluding against certainty by uncertainty, while uncertainty ought to give place to certainty. For thus they argue: such facts are *impossible*, and *ridiculous*; therefore such testimony is false. Whereas, by inverting the argument, they ought to reason thus: such testimony cannot but be true; therefore such facts are certainly possible.

XVIII. What is human reason? A faculty given us to act in a very narrow compass: while the extent of things that may be known, is infinite. If we pretend to go out of our reach, we must stumble and blunder at every step. If the eye of our reason can see so far and no farther, and notwithstanding we will pretend to pry into the secrets of God; their Majesty will oppress us, their splendor, infinitely too strong for our mole-sight, will blind us. We might as well pretend to hear with our eyes, and to see with our ears, as to wade thus presumptuously out of our depth; or to stand arguing about objects so much above our capacity, and so far beyond the reach of human reason.

XIX. If God is pleased to impart some of his secrets to man, as he actually has by the
pro-

prophets, and much more abundantly by his Son: He gives us only *his word* to trust to; and that is all sufficient. This beats down all opposition, all seeming *impossibilities*, all *preimbibed notions*; all *reasonings* vanish at the sight of the *word of God*. And it were evident blasphemy to say: *It is not so: I know it to be false: my reason tells me so*. And the only *right use* of reason in this case is, to hearken to what God says, and believe it. I think I need not dwell longer on a point, which is a maxim among Protestants as well as Catholics. Their rule of faith, they say, is the *word of God* contained in *Scripture*. What they find there, that they profess to believe, tho' never so apparently repugnant to their reason, and thus they *resolve*, or account for, their faith. Human testimony makes them look upon this book as the word of God: and this word of God reveals high Mysteries, a *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *two Natures*, *divine and human in one Person*, a *Crucified God*, &c. therefore they believe these Mysteries, notwithstanding their apparent *impossibility*: *i. e.* they look upon every objection from reason, or sense, to be of no weight, when they contradict his word thus attested. Therefore such a testimony, as we have for the divinity of the Scriptures, is not, in the judgment of Protestants, to be defeated by pretended *impossibilities*; and every objected *impossibility* is to be judged, not *real*, but *pretended* only: and reasoning from *impossibilities* against *Revelation*, instead of reasoning from *Revelation* to the *possibility* of the Mysteries *revealed*, is to be esteemed an inverting the order of *right reason*.

XX. In short, of all the means of coming at truth, whether from *metaphysical*, *sensible*, or *moral* proofs, those which result from known, authentic, indisputable events, (the truth of which is conveyed by testimony,) and are called the proofs from facts, are the best adapted to the capacity of men. No learning, but an ordinary degree of understanding is requisite to see, and acquiesce in the force of them. Metaphysical reasonings, even mathematical demonstrations, are beyond the reach of the far greatest part of mankind. — Numbers of men have believed, that there is nothing incontestable in human sciences but the truth of facts. Nay, *Pyrrhonian* excessive incredulity could not resist this evidence. It is grounded on truths, which are born with us, which are the foundation of human society, of the whole intercourse betwixt man and man : *viz.* that men are not fools and senseless; that there are certain rules, which they never depart from in their conduct; that there cannot be a joint combination amongst them to deceive; that, if they deceive sometimes, it is not without motive, without interest; that they are not all *knaves* in one age, and all *honest* in another; that the whole world never conspires to deceive any man; that no man can deceive the whole world. From these truths, which have their sanction from the consentient reason of mankind, from their general *practice* guided by reason, in the most important concerns of life, as ascertaining their genealogy, their properties, administering justice to them; this maxim is deduced, *That we must believe the testimony of men, when the facts testified*
by

by them being possible, we cannot believe they are deceived, or intend to deceive, without supposing that they are out of their wits [b]. A rule which has been followed in all times, in all places, and which will be always followed. God himself has chosen Testimony as the fittest and best conveyance of divine facts, of *Revelation*, of *Christianity*. The generality of men (and God wills all to come at the knowledge of his truths,) have no other guide, must be and are safely guided by it. The few learned are equally safe under this guidance, to which as it is the particular appointment of God, they must submit.

We shall now proceed to the satanic *prestige*, false miracles, prodigies and delusions. That there have been *such* appears evidently from the authentic testimony and unanimous consent of all Christian nations. But besides this rule of certainty we have the divine testimony of both Scriptures and the concession of learned Protestants, that the inspired writings assert this truth however treated by others as a *proof of the grossest credulity, of such superstition and credulity, that no human testimony can support it* [c].

CHAP. VII.

[b] A criterion of the credibility of human testimony.

[c] See Chap. III. §. 24. 25. 26.

C H A P. VII.

I. **I**T has been obſerved already what uſe the Reformation made in its infancy of the imputation of *Satanic* and *Anticriſtian* miracles to take from the Church of God the glory of her miracles. This has been the practice of ſectaries from the beginning; and the modern chiefs of ſects from *Luther* down to *Whiſton* inſtead of caſting out the Devil by exorcifms have raiſed him at will, and, whenever it ſerved a turn, called him to their aſſiſtance, and made him the author of the miracles, which God was pleaſed to work in favour of his Church. By this management on one ſide they tied up the arm of the Almighty and left him no power to work a miracle in defence of truth, whiſt on the other they alarmed the world with the wild charges of *ſuperſtition*, *idolatry* and *anticriſtianism*, which they vainly brought againſt the true Religion. But times are now changed; the ſeaſon of conjurers is over. And beſides, we live in an age when faſhions change in religion as in dreſs. The Devil has now no part to act on the ſtage of life. Nay, never had; for this is the prevailing ſyſtem now in vogue, ſupported by a *Van Dale*, a *Fontenelle*, and from them, by Dr. *Middleton* and Mr. *Brooke*. A few enchanting, I ſhould have ſaid, unmeaning words, or meaning only what is oppoſite to the tenets of every ſect that ever has been, *viz. ſuperſtition*, *credulity*, *fanaticism*, keep him cloſe confined ſomewhere or other (for hell with its flames are odious and unfaſhionable terms) unthought

thought of, unconcerned with the affairs of men, civil or religious, and particularly not interfering with his signs and wonders. It is but just, that, after banishing all God's miracles out of the Universe, they should be ashamed to leave any of the Devil's standing.

II. From all this it may be concluded, that the power of these systems must be more than miraculous; since all of them can at will transform divine miracles into diabolical; and diabolical, into no miracles at all, annihilate, or make nothing of them and their author.

III. But to come to the point: Infidelity itself has never yet brought a proof, why unembodied, immaterial spirits, *good and evil*, might not exist, and act in the affairs of men. In the Christian system, to use the term in vogue, wherein the divine inspiration of both Testaments is owned, to endeavour to prove from them *Satan's* interposition in this world, might seem superfluous, it being an undeniable truth; consequently, neither *intrinsically*, nor *extrinsically* incredible.

IV. We no sooner open the Bible, but we find the *devil* tempting and seducing *Eve* [a], and *by his envy death entering into the world*. We find him *a Murderer from the beginning* [b], of never-ceasing malice against *Adam's* whole posterity. He it is *who taketh away out of our hearts the word of God* [c]. He is the God of this world,

[a] Wisd. ii. 24.

[b] John viii. 44.

[c] Luke viii. 12.

world, who blinds the minds of them which believe not [d]; intraps them in his snare, they are captivated by him at his will [e]. His fury raged against *Christ's* disciples, particularly against the chief of them, seeking earnestly to have *Simon* that he might sift him like wheat [f]. Hence are we so frequently warned to be upon our guard against the assaults of this enemy of mankind. *Satan*, says *St. Paul* [g], transforms himself into an angel of light: and to the *Ephe- sians* [h], he exhorts them, and in them all of us, to put on the armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the snares of the devil, because our combat is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers and spirits of wickedness. And *St. Peter* [i], be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist strong in faith. And *St. John* [k], the old serpent that is called the devil, *Satan* that seduces the whole world, is cast down. What power, what action do these words express? The Scriptures are so copious on this head, that it were superfluous to say more upon it. Wherefore, this power, and this species of agency, in tempting to sin, in acting upon our minds and our hearts, inflaming our passions, &c. cannot be

[d] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

[e] 2 Tim. ii. 26.

[f] Luke xxii. 31.

[g] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

[h] Ephes. vi. 11, 12.

[i] 1 Petr. v. 8.

[k] Revel. xii. 9.

be denied the devil by any one who believes the Scriptures.

V. The devil's power, as to several other effects, is equally supported by scripture-authority. In how many ways did he afflict *Job*, both in his body and in his goods? Was it not the devil that killed the seven first husbands of *Raguel's* daughter [l]? To whom but the devil are we to attribute the *great signs*, by which *Antichrist* will spread his seduction [m]? What shall we say to the magicians of *Egypt*? *Moses* compares what they did to his own divine miracles: and in effect, they confirmed *Pharao* in his obduracy. And is it not evident, that their wonders were above human power, (whether you look on them as realities, or as fascinations) and consequently the works of the devil?

VI. We have seen above the devil's power to assault us by *interior* temptations: but in the Gospel [n] we behold the most wonderful *external* temptation, accompanied with several *diabolical wonders*; to which our *Blessed Saviour* was pleased to submit for our instruction; to teach us how we are to behave when assaulted by the same enemy, either interiorly or exteriorly.

The Evangelist gives us this account: *Jesus was led into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. And having fasted forty days and forty nights, He became hungry. The tempter approaching to Him, said:*

[l] Tob. v.

[m] Revel. xiii. 13. 2 Theff. ii. 8, 9.

[n] Matth. iv. Luke iv.

said: if thou art the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread. Jesus answered: it is written: man liveth not by bread only, but by every word which cometh from the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and placed Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down . . . Jesus answered: it is written: thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Then the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and shewing Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, said to Him: all these things will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus said to him: Satan be gone; for it is written: Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and serve Him only.

VII. Is not this an undeniable instance, not only of God's unspeakable goodness to man, but of the devil's power, as to exterior sensible effects? Reason must submit, and believe this: yet it is evidently against reason to believe this, and to deny him a much less power of the same kind.

Again: who can believe the Scriptures, and deny the devil's power of *possessing*, by God's permission? CHRIST not only cast out devils from many, but *promised* and *gave* the power of casting out devils to his followers [o]. Here again, a visible, sensible power of the devil, and a diabolical *sign* and *wonder*!

Farther: in how many places of Scripture do we read of *Magicians*, *Diviners*, *Pythons* and *Pytho-*

[o] Matth. viii. Luke viii.

Pythoneſſes [p]? And is not all this a commerce in ſigns and wonders between the devil and men? And has not God prohibited this commerce under pain of death? *Wizards thou ſhalt not ſuffer to live* [q]. Again: *The ſoul that ſhall go aſide after magicians and ſooth-ſayers, and ſhall commit fornication with them, I will ſet my face againſt that ſoul, and deſtroy it out of the miſt of its people* [r]. Neither let there be found among you any one that ſhall expiate his ſon or daughter, making them to paſs through the fire: or that conſulteth ſooth-ſayers, or obſerveth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer, nor any one that conſults pythonical ſpirits, or fortune-tellers, or that ſeeketh the truth from the dead [s].

VIII. God's ſeverity in prohibiting and puniſhing theſe practices, ſhews the great wickedneſs of them; conſequently the reality of magick and diabolical operations. How contrary therefore to Scripture are theſe bold infidels, yet pretenders to Chriſtianity, who treat all theſe works of the *devil*, as the intrinſecally incredible inventions of weak ſuperſtitious minds? Almighty God looks upon them with a quite different eye. This is more than enough to cover them with confuſion: May it ſuffice to bring them to their right ſenſes! *My people,*
ſays

[p] Levit. xix. 31. xx. 6. vi. 27. Deut. xviii. 10, 11. 2 Kings xxviii. Iſa. xviii. 19. xix. 3. xxix. 4. Act. xvi. 16.

[q] Exod. xxii. 18.

[r] Levit. xx. 6.

[s] Deut. xviii. 10, 11. See alſo Iſa. ii. 6. Mich. v. 11.

says God by his prophet [u], *have consulted their stocks, and their staff hath declared unto them: and the spirit of fornication has deceived them.* Here is manifest divination, diabolical superstition and diabolical operations. The same is no less evident in the New Testament [x], where St. Paul dispossessed the young woman of the *python* or devil that was in her; and in the *pythonissa* that Saul consulted [y]. The learned Protestant Gerard Vossius [z] had reason to say: *From my heart do I abominate those who will not be persuaded, that there is any intercourse between men and spirits. I have often discoursed this point with them: and found them, either very superficial readers of Scripture; or, whatever they might pretend, in reality, making little account of Scripture-authority.*

IX. It may be here objected, that, according to Scripture, the gods of the Heathens are devils; that those can neither hear, nor see, nor help, nor hurt us; that they can do *nothing*, are mere *nothings*: and if so, all their oracles, their magick, &c. are mere fancy, mere imagination. I answer, first, that not only *demons*, or fallen angels, are in Scripture said to be gods of the Heathens; but secondly, whatever they adored; and thirdly, and more frequently, the very *idols* or *statues* themselves. In the first sense it is said, *They sacrificed to devils, and not to God* [a]; and,

[u] Ose. iv. 12.

[x] Acts xvi.

[y] 1 Kings xxviii.

[z] Epist. ad Joan. Beversic. de Pythonis. Saulis.

[a] Deut. xxxii. 17.

and, *The things which Heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, not to God* [b]. In the second sense, *If Baal be a god, let him revenge himself on him that hath cast down his altar* [c]. In the third sense it is said, *Why hast thou stolen away my gods* [d]? *You shall not make gods of silver, nor shall you make to yourselves gods of gold* [f].

This distinction answers the objections, and reconciles the Scriptures; which ascribe great power to the *dæmonia*, and deny all power to the *idols*, and to the objects represented by these idols, *Baal, Jupiter, &c.*

X. The Scripture-authority being so clear and peremptory for the power of *devils*, for their miracles or wonders, for their communication with mankind in *magick, witchcraft, oracles, possessions*; &c., it is unaccountable, how any Christian, more than nominally such, can make a question of it. Were there any obscurity, any room to evade this sacred authority, by even unnatural, groundless, forced, abusive interpretations, the wonder would be less, or rather no wonder: but we see too frequent examples of this blasphemous licentiousness. Scripture, in the modern use of it, is forced to give a sanction to both extremes of the contradiction, to warrant every error however execrable

[b] 1 Cor. i. 10, 20.

[c] Judg. vi. 31.

[d] 3 Kings xviii. 6, 7. Wisd. xiv. 15. ii. 15. xvii. 2.

[e] Gen. xxxi. 30.

[f] Exod. xx. 23. xxxii. 3. Judg. xviii. 24. Psal. ii. 3.

crable and opposite to the word of God. For what do they call Scripture, but the mere *words* of Scripture, and their own preconceived fancies its *sense*? Which in reality, is no better than setting Scripture aside, and making each their own whims the ultimate *rule* and *ground* of their belief. What *Deist*, would his sincerity permit it, but might admit Scripture upon these terms, and yet retain the same deistical liberty and latitude of thinking and speaking?

XI. But were Scripture less clear, does not the universal *persuasion* and the universal *faith* of Christians remove all doubt, as to the true *sense*?

Let us add to this *catholick authority* the sense of all temporal Powers, which, whether *Heathen* or *Christian*, have in their political capacity made laws against *magick*, *witchcraft*, &c. with severe punishments against the offenders. And is it consistent with common sense and common modesty, to say, that all these laws were made against a mere phantom, against delinquents that never existed? What but the conviction of truth, could unite all *ages*, and all *religions*, all the *learned* and *wise* in this universal persuasion? No concert possible of *fraud* and *forgery* here. Man, we know, is liable to mistakes: but, that all mankind should be in an error, the same error, an error they have no advantage in, that does not flatter, but oppose their passions and self-love, an error, which if such, their senses must have constantly confuted; this, I may venture to say, is incredible, is impossible.

XII. *Libertinism* is plainly the source of this *unchristian* novelty. No *heaven*, no *hell*, no *devil*, no *God*, is the *Libertines* wish : or, at least, a God without Providence. The persuasion of this intercourse between evil spirits and mankind, is principally looked upon as derived, among Pagans, from the ancientest of all books, the Scriptures : from the tradition of true believers ; and from facts, to which themselves were witnesses.

XIII. That the Scriptures were in the hands of many of the learned Heathens, that they admired them, and drew from them the best of their sentiments and maxims, is demonstrated by many able writers. And among the numberless errors and superstitions of idolatry, it is easy to observe several foot-steps, or imperfect remains of that primitive tradition, by which, before *Moses*, God's people was guided. As to dæmoniacal facts, the chief were their *oracles*. These, we have seen, often commanded human sacrifices, sometimes of the children of Princes, to appease the anger of the gods, and to avert publick calamities. These were submitted to, as commands of the gods. Would the priests go about to *cheat* mankind into such unnatural actions ? From what motive ? and with what danger to themselves ? But how could they ? So great an interest as the fondness of parents for their children, mutual ties of friendship, the sentiments of humanity, the horror that arises in nature at such immolations, would make these cruel orders narrowly pryed into, and the authority examined ; and no *cheat*, no *imposture* of such a
duration

duration and *extent* could have remained undiscovered, while there was so great, so publick an interest to discover it. Hence Heathens, at least the generality of them, were persuaded, that in the main these oracles were not the effect of imposture in their priests. And when, as it frequently happened, they went beyond the knowledge and contrivance of man, how could they be ascribed to human fraud and deceit? They believed they proceeded from, and therefore ascribed them to, their gods, who were devils, as divine testimony assures us. *They sacrificed unto devils, not to God* [g].

This has been so invincibly proved by the learned *Baltus* against the *Van Dales* and *Fontenelles*, that his work has stood above half a century unanswered by the *Esprits forts*, and ever will.

XIV. To conclude this point: First, nothing is plainer in Scriptures, both Old and New, than the power and agency of devils, in *possessions, oracles, magick, temptations, &c.* All the Fathers, all Christians see it there: No one ever doubted its being Scripture-doctrine: all Sects have in this agreed with Catholicks. And after all this, shall we doubt of its being Scripture-doctrine? Are their eyes fascinated or blinded, and a few *Neoterics* the only *Seers*? What a prodigy is this? How far transcending diabolical wonders? We must believe all the world blind, ourselves blind, and sight must be the exclusive property of a few just now making their appearance in the world. Secondly, as these

[g] Deut. xxxii. 17.

these wise ones pretend *evidence* against diabolical operations, those, who from age to age have asserted their *reality*, must have been strangely stupid, or strangely wicked. Stupid, if they did not see what is *evident*; or wicked, if seeing, they resisted the light, and with obstinacy maintained the contrary. For under one or other of these two heads, all the Fathers, all Christians, and even Heathens are taken in. Can any man in his senses parcel out the whole world of all ages, into fools and knaves? I can easier believe, that the only wise men in *England* are confined in *Moor-fields*, and all the real lunaticks at liberty.

XV. If we are to look upon evil spirits thus totally unactive in the affairs of this world; if all that is said and believed of their power and wonders is incredible, and void of reality and truth, and the effect of imagination only, are we in the same mistake as to good spirits, or angels? Are they as unactive in doing good to man, as the others in doing evil? Have they no power, no employment, as agents under Almighty God in the government of the world? Their reasoning (if it deserves that name) makes *angels* as unactive as *devils*. But yet no Christian can question their power. *All angels of God*, says the Psalmist [b], *who are mighty in strength, and execute his word, hearkning unto the voice of his orders*. St. Peter says [i], the angels are in *strength and power superior* to other creatures. They are called in Scripture *dominations, virtues,*
powers.

[b] Psal. ciii. 20.

[i] 2 Petr. ii. 11.

powers. How often have these holy spirits visibly appeared, by the Scripture account, to *Agar*, to *Lot*, to *Joshuab*, to *Gideon*, to *David*, to *Isaiab*, to *Daniel*, and others, in the Old Testament; in the New, to the *Mother of Christ*, to *Christ* himself, to the *guards* of the sepulchre, to the *holy women*, to the *Apostles*? Must all this too be taken for fancy and fiction? And if not, since fallen angels, or *devils*, are of the *same nature* with good ones, we must conclude, that nothing of all this exceeds their power; and if they do not more frequent mischief, it is because the goodness of God interposes, and restrains them.

XVI. It is not then for want of human or divine testimony, that *Satan's* agency and its effects are discarded. Nor is it an argument against them, that he does not exhibit them visibly to their eyes, in possessions, in magical delusions, for this obvious reason. It is much more to the interest of the kingdom of *Satan*, that the belief of his power, and even of his being, should be *utterly extinct* [k], as we are assured by the *wise Few* it is, than that he should work wonders or extraordinary effects to revive it; and to awaken at the same time, both fear and remorse in Infidels and Libertines, by visible tokens of an invisible, but dreadful, executioner of divine justice. The manifest increase of infidelity itself, with all its dire effects, abundantly indicates from what spirit they proceed, and how inconsistent such systems are with the Christian belief of the existence and ministerial

[k] Free Inquiry, p. 223.

rial agency of spirits. Strange, that human and divine testimony must not support the reality of diabolical wonders, lest they should support also the reality of divine miracles: that human imposture must take place, and be substituted to that of *Satan*; and where *bell-gates* could not, human forgery must prevail!

C H A P. VIII.

I. **W**E have a farther and convincing argument, for the truth we defend, from *prophecy* [1], which gives us clear and distinct marks of divine miracles. This was just hinted above, and now properly takes its place here. *Prophecy* is too great a miracle, too illustrious a proof of Christianity, to escape the assaults and malice, the utmost efforts of infidelity against it. As Dr. *Middleton* has endeavoured to discredit the Church's miracles in general, by comparing them with those of Sects and Heathens, so has he done the same in particular with regard to prophecy. *Prophetic visions*, and *extatic trances*, and the *discovery of men's hearts*, which the Apostle indeed says, *would make the very Infidel fall down on his face, and worship God, and report, that God is in us of a truth* [m], seem to him to be the fruit of one and the same spirit, which exerted itself chiefly about the second, and beginning of the third century [n].
What

[1] Chap. V. § xxxv.

[m] 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

[n] Free Inquiry, p. 96.

What does he say this spirit was? *A temporary madness or loss of senses* [o], and *Suidas* is cited to prove, that the *fury* or *madness* of the poets and the prophets were alike, and *Pbilo* the Jew is also brought in to confirm the same. What hindered him from citing *Maimonides* and *Spinoza* [p], from whom he might have learned, that nothing more is requisite to prophecy, than to have a lively and strong imagination, susceptible of the fit impression of images, easily carried away by the impetuous current of the spirits, engraving deep traces in it, however irregular? His conclusion is, that *the prophecy of the primitive Church by vision and extasy, was of the same kind, as to its outward appearance, with that divination by fury, as it was called among the Gentiles, which was practised by the Delphic Pythia and Cumæan Sibyl. . . . Montanus the heretic, and his female associates, seem to have been the authors of these prophetic trances . . . who first raised and propagated that spirit of Enthusiasm in the Church* [q].

II. What is the tendency of this rash assertion, but to persuade, that the Church's prophecy, no less than her miracles, (tho' perfectly similar to and grounded on those of the Scriptures,) is to be ranked with the false prophecies of Heathens and Sectarists? That the *Montanists*, who, he owns [r], were cast out of the Church and reckoned in the the

[o] Ibid. p. 97.

[p] Maimon. *more nevochim*, part. ii. c. 8. 52. 36. Spinoz. Tract. Theol. Polit.

[q] Ibid. p. 99.

[r] Ibid. p. 112. Epiphan. Hæres. 48. § 2.

catalogue of hereticks by *Epiphanius*, and by all their *orthodox* cotemporaries, *i. e.* by the Church of *Christ*, for denying the *perpetuity* and *truth* of the Church's prophecies, and for maintaining their own, attended by *fury* and *convulsions*, were nevertheless members of the true Church? Or that trances, or extasy, which deprives man of the use of reason, is the same with that, which leaves the perfect use of it, which enlightens and perfects reason: and consequently, that the prophets, *St. Paul*, though rapt by extasy into *paradise*, bearing and learning words, or mysteries, *unutterable by man*, was really out of his wits, because, *whether in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell* [s]; and that the prophecy of a *Daniel*, a *St. John*, was quite the same with that of the *Delphic Pythia*, the *Sibyl* as described by the poet, and other pretenders to prophecy among Heathens and Sectaries? Or, to conclude, does not this bold assertion tend to shew, that prophecy in the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church, whereby variety of facts have been foretold, at the distance of many ages, contingent facts, depending upon free will, and to which no finite understanding could discover any anterior determination, or disposition, must and can be accounted for by *madness*, by *fury*, by *loss of wits* or *senses*, or by *images* deeply imprinted in a lively and strong imagination? But men in their sober senses, free from the transports, which passion for a system may cause, can only be convinced from this way of arguing, what this author might have been persuaded was

[s] 2 Cor. xii.

was his own case by his favourite *Cicero*; that no opinion, no system, can be so unreasonable and absurd, as not to meet with an abettor [t].

III. No wonder that this wise Heathen should ask, by way of raillery: *What authority can that madness have, which you call divine, that a wise man should not be able to foresee, what a mad man can? and that he who has lost all human senses, should presently acquire divine ones* [u]? Tokens of imposture so sensible, as not to escape discovery by the light of reason, could never escape being discovered by reason assisted with the light of faith. Accordingly, no sooner did *Montanus* aim to introduce this false prophecy into the Church of *Christ*, but the visible and sensible tokens of his imposture were pointed out. It was observed, that no true prophet ever spoke, or delivered, his prophecies in *extasy* [x]. The Christian Fathers distinguished betwixt *extasy* accompanied with the loss of wits or reason, and such *extasy* as elevating the soul to God, elevated also her rational faculties. And well might *Epiphanius*, cited by the Doctor, make this, one criterion, or distinguishing character of a true and false prophet, that the first constantly retained his senses, and with firmness of mind apprehended and uttered the divine oracles [y]. To the same purpose is what he cites from St. *Hierom* [z], who speaks of no other *extasy* but what

[t] *Cicero de Divin.* l. 11.

[u] *Ibid* 2. 24. cited in the *Free Inqu.* p. 98.

[x] *Euseb. Hist.* l. v. c. 17.

[y] *Epiph. advers. hæres.* l. 2. T. i. § iii. p. 404.

[z] *Hier. Op.* V. iii. p. 1559. Prol. in *Nahum Proph.* Id. Prol. in *Habacuc.* p. 1591.

what is attended with madness of heart, like Montanus and his mad women, in which extasy, or any kind of extasy, the true prophets never spoke . . . but understood what they delivered, and could speak, or hold their tongues, whenever they pleased, which those, who spake in extasy [a] (mad extasy) could not do. He might have also cited St. Chrysostome [b], that to go out of one's self, be forced by necessity, impelled, dragged like one furious and mad; is peculiar to the false prophet. Not so the true; who in his sober senses, and steady frame of mind, utters all, and understands what he utters. He might have added Lactantius [c], as well as his Tully, to the same purpose, That the divination (of God's prophets) agreeing in what they predicted, shewed they were not mad or furious. For what man that is out of himself can, I dont say foretel the future, but speak coherently? To foretel future events, such only as the Omniscient can know, is an essential characteristic of divine prophecy, which infidelity vainly attempting to shake the credit of all prophecy,

[a] St. Hierom pref. to Habacuk says: *Qui autem in extasi, id est, invitatus loquitur, nec tacere nec loqui in sua potestate habet.* But he that speaks in an extasy, that is, against his will, has it not in his power to be silent or to speak.

[b] Chrysost. in 2 Corinth. xii. 1.

[c] In unam sententiam congruens divinatio (Prophetarum) docet non fuisse furiosos. Quis enim mentis emotæ non modo futura præcinere, sed etiam coherentia loqui possit? Lactant. 1. 1. c. 4.

cy, strives to confound with diabolical or human pretensions to it [d].

IV. And what more vain than this attempt, (by which *Middleton* says, *the credit of all prophecy seems to be shaken*,) an attempt that derives its whole force from a single word, taken in a different sense, on a different subject, by different men, who had no other difference in sentiments? What more vain; when we have seen a great Apostle, rapt in spirit to the third heaven, not only in the perfect possession of all his mental faculties, but those enlarged by the ineffable divine intercourse; yet declaring his ignorance of a circumstance of it, which *God indeed knew*, but *he knew not*? Especially, when the main point in question is clear, viz. that prophecy, as above specified, must necessarily be divine, and equally divine, whether communicated in *extasy* as understood by some, or without it, as understood by others? But I am sensible this exceeds my plan, as I profess to believe, with all Christian Divines, the truth of Scripture-prophecy, which I have hitherto insisted on, to shew, that the Church's miracles (and prophecy is one of the greatest) cannot be impugned but on principles inconsistent with Christianity. I come therefore to what immediately concerns my present subject, a farther distinctive character of truth, which prophecy adds to miracles.

V. 1. All things are known to God! The past, present, and future have no obscurity for him, but are alike naked to his eyes. For God does

[d] Free Inquiry, p. 110.

does all things [e]. Bodies are subject to his power. Wills, however free, are in his hands. Without prejudice to that Liberty of which he is the Author, he makes it subservient to the decrees of his justice, or of his mercy, with such strength and wisdom, as is superior to all obstacles. This first truth is inseparable from the two following.

2. What God does in time, is but the execution of his eternal decrees.

3. God therefore can reveal the future as infallibly as he can make known the present; and none but God can reveal the future, because none but God knows his own free *volitions*.

4. The principles already established [f], with regard to miracles in general, take place here, with regard to miraculous prophecy. *Viz.* It is not impossible that God should discover some future events to spirits which are enemies to man. Man therefore stands in need of a rule to distinguish divine prophecies from such as may proceed from a seducing spirit. This is the rule:

5. Whatever prophecy is made in the name of God, Creator of heaven and earth, bespeaks our attention till its accomplishment: It is divine, if verified by the event. Whatever prophecy wants this requisite of being made in the name of God, is unworthy of our attention. The demonstration [g] of the criterion, is to be here applied.

[e] Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, Joan. i.

[f] Chap. iv. §. viii. & seq.

[g] See Chap. iv. ibid.

applied. It is inconsistent with the idea we conceive of the Deity, that he should authorise the abuse of his holy name by such proofs as would necessarily draw man into error: Now prophecy made in the name of God, would be a proof of this nature. A man foretels the future in the name of God; the event answers the prediction; I cannot reject this man's authority; it is evident, that God speaks by his mouth [b].

VI. The predictions of *Moses*, of the *Prophets*, with respect to *Christ*, and the Kingdom or the Church of *Christ*, were all made in the name of God, and the far greatest part already verified by the event. The predictions of *JESUS CHRIST*, with respect to what was to happen to himself, to his Disciples, to the Jews, to his Church, were beyond the reach of all conjectures. It is no less clear, that they were made in the name of God; for *JESUS CHRIST* continually refers to God his Father, all he says, all he does, as to him in whom he knows all, from whom he has learnt all, and received all.

[b] *The Prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that Prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, how shall I know, or distinguish the word which the Lord hath not spoken? By this mark shall you know it. When a Prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken.* Deut. xviii. 20, 21, 22.

The infallible criterion of the divinity of a prophecy is therefore its being made in the name of God, and verified by the event.

It is also clear, that it is impossible there should be a more perfect conformity, than there is betwixt these predictions and the event. Therefore they are divine. Therefore whatsoever the Prophets of old, whatsoever JESUS CHRIST has predicted, receives from this prophecy a character of truth, a weight or sanction, equal at least to that of miracles.

VII. The miracles of JESUS CHRIST had not only this character of divine truth by being foretold, but his prophecies also had the same character, by being predicted. For this was singular to the *Messiah*, as a Prophet above all other prophets, to unite in his own Person these two privileges, expressed in the prophecies made of Him. *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. . . . Whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him [i],* says God by *Moses*. Miracles therefore, and prophecy itself, thus acquire a particular character of truth from divine prediction.

VIII. This character was much insisted on by the Fathers in their disputes with their Heathen adversaries. *Celsus* denied that *Christ's* Divinity was sufficiently proved by the miracles he wrought. *It is sufficiently proved,* replies *Origen*, *from those prophecies [k], that God himself should*

[i] Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

[k] Isa. xxxv.

should come and save them, and then the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf should be unstopped, &c. [1]. Thus Irenæus, ascribing the wonders wrought by Simon the magician, and Carporates, to dæmoniacal illusions, defends CHRIST's miracles from the like imputation. Should this, says he, be objected, that the like illusions intervened in the miracles of CHRIST, we carry them back to the prophecies and evince most demonstratively, that as they were predicted so were they wrought, and that he alone is the Son of God.

IX. It is insisted on by St. Augustin [m]. *The prophetic testimony*, says this great Doctor, *accompanies*

[1] Certè, quia claudos & cæcos sanavit, ideo pro Christo Dei Filio habendum constat ex illis prophetiis, *hinc aperientur* &c. Origen. l. ii. cont. Celsum.

Si autem & dæmonem per phantasmata hujusmodi fecisse dicunt; ad prophetica reducentes eos, ex ipsiis demonstrabimus, omnia sic de eo & prædicta esse, & facta firmissimè, & ipsum solum esse Filium Dei. Iren. l. ii. contr. Hæres. c. 32.

[m] Prædicationem doctrinæ apostolicæ propheticum testimonium comitatur. Ut etenim non contemnerentur quæ apostoli annunciabant, demonstrabantur hæc a Prophetis ante fuisse prædicta. Quia etsi attestabantur miracula, non defuissent, sicut etiam nunc adhuc quidam mussitant, qui magicæ potentiæ cuncta illa tribuerent, nisi talis eorum cogitatio contestatione prophetica vinceretur. Magicis enim artibus longè antequam nascerentur, Prophetas sibi constituere a quibus prænunciarentur, nemo utique diceret. L. xii. contr. Faustum.

Quis nostrum non miretur delatâ voce de cælo certiore Propheticum sermonem ab Apostolo dictum esse?

companies the preaching of the apostolic doctrine. To prevent what the Apostles announced from being despised, these things were shewn to have been foretold by the Prophets. For, although they appealed to their miracles, there would not have been wanting then, as some are not wanting now, such as would ascribe them all to magical powers, had not those surmises been overpowered by prophetic authority. For none surely will say, that they had by art-magick provided prophets before-hand to foretel their miracles, and this long before they were born themselves. And again, who of us, says this same Doctor, does not wonder at the saying of an Apostle, that prophecy is more firm and sure than a voice from heaven? Observe, he sayd, it was more sure; not better, not truer. For that word from heaven was as true as the prophetic word, as good, as profitable. How then more sure, unless more apt to convince the bearer? And why more apt? Because there are Infidels so injurious to CHRIST, as to say, that he wrought his miracles by art-magick . . . who might also refer the voice from heaven to the same art. But the Prophets were not only before this same voice, but before CHRIST was born in the flesh. CHRIST sent his Prophets, before he had assumed our flesh. Whoso then says, that he was a magician, and as such made himself worshipped even after his death, will he also say, that he was a magician before he was born? You see the reason why the Apostle says, we have

esse? Certiorem fanè dixit: certiorem, non meliorem, non veriore, &c. Serm. xxvii. de verbis Apost. c. 4. Edit. Lovan.

have a more sure word of prophecy. The voice from heaven was to admonish the Faithful: the prophetic word, to convince the Infidel.

X Here it is plain from the primitive Fathers, *Irenaus*, *Origen*, and from the later testimony of *Augustin*, that the common sense of the Heathen world, of *Julian* and *Celsus*, could discover no means of eluding the force of supernatural effects, such as the miracles of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, confirmed by the faith of history, but by ascribing them to a superior cause, which alone could seem adequate to such effects. As their infidelity necessarily rejected that divine agency, they had recourse to dæmoniacal delusion. To this plea the common sense of all Christian sects, of Protestantism itself, had constantly recourse, to elude the force of the Church's miracles universally confirmed by human testimony. The plea of universal imposture and infatuation of mankind has been reserved for modern infidelity: and our days may boast of the rare discovery, how to screen the Church of *Christ* from all her imputed superstition, by the easy expedient of depriving one part of Christendom of all their senses [n], and the other, of all common honesty, for a time only, not much short indeed of the whole duration of the Christian name.

XI. But till such empirics in religion can boast with truth, that the belief of Christianity is as utterly extinct amongst them, as that of witch-

[n] See criterion of the truth of human testimony, Chap. xi. §. xxi.

witchcraft; the devil will always be believed a *liar from the beginning*, and the *father of lies* and of all imposture; and those, who are so industrious in their attempts to deceive the Christian world into their opinion, that the agency of evil spirits is without any foundation, are but tools, or under-agents, subordinate to the spirit of error, lifted under his banner, and fight for his pay. The promise made to the Church, that the *gates of hell shall never prevail against her*, as it is a security for her preservation from all error, is eminently a guard against this error and weak artifice, that stands in such evident opposition to the sacred Text. From all such pretended imposture the plea of infidelity, the miracles of *Christ*, wrought in the *name of God*, foretold by *prophecy*, are invincibly secured. Why may not the Church's miracles, wrought in the *name of Christ*, prophesied by *Christ*, be equally secured?

XII. It is impossible, that the miracles, which were wrought in the name of God, and had the sanction of divine prophecy, should be the effects of any imposture, or of any other, than an almighty power and wisdom. Therefore the same must be said of the Church's miracles wrought in the name of *Christ* and prophesied by *Christ*. It has been already proved with regard to miracles, wrought in the name of God, and of prophecy made in his name and fulfilled by the event, that they must necessarily be divine. The consequence, with regard to both done in the name of *Christ*, only wants to be farther explained.

XIII.

XIII. There is no *Protestant Church*, but has acknowledged in her profession of faith, the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*. It is therefore impossible, that miracles wrought in his name, should be the proofs of falshood. This is what *Jesus Christ* taught his Disciples: *There is no man, says he, which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me* [o]. For how can it be possible, that the *Light*, the *Way*, the *Truth* and the *Life of men*, should permit a seducer to make this use of his power and sacred name; that name which casts out devils and puts hell to flight; by which only man is saved, and at which every knee should bow in heaven, in earth, and beneath the earth [p]?

XIV. Proceeding by the light of reason only, that idea which all men bear impressed in their soul of the Infinite Being, could be our guide and direct us in distinguishing of miracles, until God himself enlarged this idea; that is, till he made himself known to us in a more perfect manner. On this principle, neither the miracles of *Moses*, nor of *Christ* himself were admitted as a divine testimony of their mission, but as they were wrought in the name of God. *Jesus Christ* wrought miracles in the name of God, to prove that he was verily the Son of God; we are therefore certain, that the infinitely perfect Being hath a Son who is equal to him. It is therefore no longer lawful for us to divide the Father and the Son in our adorations. For it is manifest, that the invocation of the name

[o] Mark ix. 39.

[p] Philip. ii. 10.

name of God ought to be conformable to the knowledge which he has given us of his being. It is therefore in the name of God by *Jesus Christ*, or in the name of *Jesus Christ*, that miracles should be wrought. *All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father [q]. No man cometh to the Father, but by the Son. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth [r].* All miracles therefore should be the effect of his power, and consequently wrought in his name. Accordingly, when he sends his Disciples to preach the Gospel, he gives them power to work miracles *in his name [s]*, and promises the same power to those, who *shall believe in him [t]*.

XV. The first proposition then deduced from established principles is manifest. It is impossible, that the Church's miracles, which are wrought in the name of *Christ*, and which have the sanction of this divine prophecy, *these signs shall follow them that believe*, should be the effect of any imposture. I proceed to the second proposition, or consequence, no less manifest. *Viz.* As other indefinite prophecies of *Jesus Christ* unlimited by him to any age, may be fulfilled, and have been fulfilled in all ages, the same must be said of this other indefinite prophecy concerning miracles. It would be no difficult matter to fill whole pages with the numerous

[q] John v. 23. xiv. 6.

[r] Matth. xxviii. 18.

[s] Luke x. 9, 17.

[t] Mark xvi. 17.

merous prophecies of our divine Saviour. I shall content myself with the three following. What prophecy could be more clear, yet what more astonishing, than what we read in St. *Matthew*, concerning the conversion of Heathen nations? *I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven* [u]. The faith of history delivers to us the accomplishment of this divine prophecy, and the signs that followed those that believed. But of this, more hereafter. For certainly no prophecy can be more evidently fulfilled, and still continue to be fulfilled.

What can be clearer, than our Saviour's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem? *He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known even thou, in this thy day the things belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation* [x]. The siege laid by *Titus* is both foretold and represented with exactness, the manner of encompassing the town, the slaughter of the inhabitants, the ruins of that unfortunate city. The consent of historians, the persuasion of mankind, the remaining Jews dispersed about the world since the

[u] *Matth.* viii. 11.[x] *Luke* x. 41.

the fall of their capital, are evidences, to which incredulity has nothing rational to oppose. And the sun never appeared with greater light, than the truth of this prediction and its accomplishment.

What prophecy more clear, than that which is related by the same Evangelist on occasion of the precious ointment, which *Mary* the sister of *Lazarus* poured on the head of *Jesus Christ* in the house of *Simon* the leper? *Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there also shall this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her* [y]. What likelihood at that time, that this action should be published to the utmost limits of the whole world, and *Mary* become thus renowned in all ages? Our own senses are witnesses of its accomplishment. But before I proceed to my other propositions, or consequences, from the above principles, it may be proper to observe, what is worthy our notice in the history of *Jesus Christ*.

XVI. He does not only foretel the future, like the rest of the prophets, who preceded him, and prophesied of him and his Church, but he frequently engages to perform what he foretels; that is, he manifestly speaks as God. He promises to resuscitate his own body to give success to his Gospel, to convert the Gentiles by his death, to punish the Jews, to make his Apostles the fishers of men, to send the Holy Ghost to them, to give them wisdom, strength and courage, the power of mira-

[y] Matth. xxvi. 23.

miracles, of remitting and retaining sins, and never to forsake them. The execution of all this is impossible to any but an infinite power; that of God himself. *Christ* is therefore God; and were he not God, these and many other of his divine truths, in the mouth of any creature how perfect soever, would be no other than downright blasphemies. Such prophecies as these, which have effects for their object, manifestly beyond the limits of all created power, are called his promises: Divine promises, since the execution of them evidently proves the unlimited power and Divinity of *Jesus Christ*.

XVII. One of those divine truths, or promises, relates to his Church, which was to receive the Holy Ghost, even the *Spirit of truth*, which was to guide her *into all truth, and abide with her for ever*, as *Christ* had promised he himself would do, *even unto the end of the world*. The perpetuity of this gift [z] to his Church teaching *all truth* to the world's end, on which her unerring authority is grounded, antecedently to *Christ's* prophetic promise, was prophesied of her by the ancient Prophets. Not to multiply texts in proof of so evident a point, I shall content myself with those of the Old Testament referred to in the note [a]. The

27th
[z] See Note §. xiv. Chap. iii.

[a] Isa. ix. 6, 7. xxxv. 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17. ix. 11, 12, 15, 16, 18. Ezekiel xxxvii. 24, 26. Hosea ii. 19. See the contents prefixed before these chapters in the Protestant Bible, and how far they are

owned

27th verse of the last Psalm referred to, containing his glorious promise, is understood by *Calvin* himself of the Church of *Christ*, the spiritual Seed of *David* [b]. The XLVIIIth Psalm speaks of the ornaments and privileges of the Church, according to the contents prefixed in the Protestant Bible. Compare with them the places referred to in the New Testament [c], and it will be manifest, that as *Christ*'s prophecy and doctrines, received a divine character of truth from prophecy, so does the Church's prophecy and doctrine. And as it is impossible there should be any reasonable pretext for rejecting his miracles on account of his doctrines, so it is equally impossible to reject the Church's miracles and doctrines.

XVIII. From what has been said it clearly appears, that the cause of *Christ* and his Church, which these systems allow to be the same during the lives of the Apostles, or during the three

first
owned to relate to the Church. Isa. lix. 20, 21. Pf. xlvii. 8. Pf. lxxii. 5, 7. Pf. lxxxix. 3, 4, 27. Daniel c. ii. 44.

[b] L. iv. Instit. c. l. sect. 27.
[c] Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. John xiv. 15, 17. Luke i. 32. Matth. i. 16, 18. with those places of the New Testament compare the following: Matth. xvi. 18, xxiv. 35. Joh. xiv. 6, 26. Matth. xviii. 17. Luke x. 16. Joh. xvi. 13. xx. 22, 23. I Tim. iii. 14, 15. Ephes. v. 23, 24, 28, 29, 31, 32. For the application of these Scriptures to the present point, and answer to what has been observed against it by Protestantism, the Reader is referred to the Unerring Authority of the Catholic Church by R. C. maintained against the exceptions of a late Author.

first centuries, continues the same through all ages; that human imposture, which is employed to support the denial of the agency of spirits, can never prevail against the Church; and that the principles, by which the miracles of *Christ* and those of his *Church*, are attack'd, are common to Infidels and Sectaries, as we shall shew hereafter, when their grand objection to both comes to be considered.

CHAP. IX.

THE farther we advance, the more we shall be convinced of the impossibility, that any of these systems should answer the wish, and clear up the *darkness*, which the Author of the *previous questions* complains they are left in, with respect to a criterion, or one distinctive mark, betwixt Mr. *Middleton's*, and other Protestants, *Demoniacal*; *Albanasian*, *Popish*, *Diabolical* miracles, and a *true* miracle [a]. Or, to speak in the language of a Christian, who believes the *Catholic Church*, the more we shall be convinced, that it is impossible to assign any distinction, any intrinsic difference, betwixt miracles prophecied, and by which prophecies are fulfilled, and miracles wrought in the *name of God*, in the *name of Christ*, in one age, and miracles, alike characterized, wrought in another. Miracles thus characterized are ascribed by Jewish and Christian sectarists to *Beelzebub*, and by modern and antient Infidels to human or diabolical

[a] See Chap. iii. § and note xxviii.

diabolical imposture; but neither can discover any distinction between them, but what is consistent with, and necessary to, every antichristian error, and therefore inconsistent with Christian truth.

II. The following truths have either been owned, or proved by the evidence of reason.

1. That if *Cbrist* had wrought miracles (speaking of miracles in general, as supernatural effects) in proof of doctrines really opposite to natural, or revealed doctrines, the *Jewish* Church ought to have rejected them. 2. That God can work no miracles in proof of doctrines really *impossible*, or of an *evil tendency*, or *opposite* to any natural, or revealed truths. 3. That the infinite power can impress such characters of truth on his own divine revelations, and prove them by such miracles, as to cut off from every species of error, every pretext for rejecting any revealed doctrine, or capable of being revealed, as *impossible*, or of an *evil tendency*, or as *opposite* to any natural, or revealed truths. 4. That both these systems must own, (consistently with the belief of Christianity, and its being miraculously established and propagated,) that *Cbrist's* and the Church's miracles were such, during the lives of the Apostles, or during some primitive centuries. For it is evident, and confessed, that the infinite Power and Wisdom intending an effect, always employs the *fittest and best means for attaining it* [b], and consequently, intending to establish and propagate Christianity
by

[b] See Chap. I. § X.

by miracles, would never employ such, as could rationally be rejected upon what plea soever, or be baffled by such vain pretexts.

III. The question then is, what distinctive mark can be assigned by the Authors of those systems, betwixt the Church-miracles, which they admit within their respective periods, and the Church - miracles after that term? What difference can they shew between the miracles of a *St. Martin, Augustin, Bernard*, and a *Xavier*, who in different centuries, but in obedience to the same divine precepts of preaching and calling sinners to repentance, healed the sick, cast out devils, raised the dead in the name of *Jesus Christ*, and thus fulfilled his prophecies by miracles and the conversion of nations; and all this for a manifest good end, the same good end, which appears as clearly in their miracles, as in raising *Lazarus* from the grave, *that the Son of God might be glorified* [c]?

IV. Permit me to observe, that the criterion, or distinctive mark to be assigned must be such, as has not already been proved *precarious* [d] by their own confession, and common to all error, absolutely irreconcilable with the miracles, which these very systems dare not reject, and therefore incapable of being a rule of truth. A criterion inconsistent with the prophetic promises of God must be inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity. On the contrary it must be a criterion, which will afford no just ground to Infidels to deny the existence and the possibility

[c] John xi. 4.

[d] See Chap. II. § IX. & seq.

lity of the God of Christians, who must appear to want the essential attributes of the infinitely perfect Being, if he so solemnly promised what he either could not, thro' want of power, perform, or would not, thro' want of truth and fidelity. A serious Christian protestant may well *wish* to have such a criterion, and has right to insist on having it produced, in order to know, whether he may be allowed to be any longer a christian on the foundation of either of these systems. But he cannot be a very serious Christian, if, after demanding it in vain, he resolves to continue still *in the dark*.

V. I have already said, and I repeat it, that it is in vain to expect such a criterion from sectaries. The moment any one refuses to hear the church, and endeavours to *graft* his *novelties* on the body of her doctrines, he must reject all characters how divine soever of the church, of her doctrines, of her miracles, if they don't exactly tally with his new scheme. Sects must acknowledge no criterion, or distinguishing mark, whereby to know what is *possible*, what has an *evil tendency*, what is contrary to *natural* or *revealed truths*, what is *indifferent*, what is, or is not a divine character, but from the conformity, or opposition, either the miracle, or doctrine hath to the tenets of Sectaries. Consequently the only miracles, which can stand the test of this criterion, are such as prophetic testimony has stamp'd with the characters of falshood. The only *rites* and *discipline*, no less than doctrine, to be admitted *pure*, *primitive*, untainted with *novelty*, *superstition*, *idolatry*; the only *mysteries*, (for sects, nay even Deists [e], have their mysteri-

Q 2

ous

[e] See observations on the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul, p. 104.

ous truths) to be admitted, as not contradictory to the evident principles of reason, to our clear and intuitive knowledge [f], must be admitted such by their conformity with this rule, or by their non-conformity, be certainly *known to be false and absurd*.

VI. Here then is the criterion, which perfectly answers the wish of every sect, and system of incredulity, however contradictory. No wonder an invention of so dark an origin was not brought to light in the earlier ages of infidelity. By this criterion, not only supernatural effects, prodigies or miracles in general, but the miracles of God himself, stamp'd with the clearest marks of his divine power and authority, are reduced to the test of the opinions, which sects and Infidels have respectively broached in points of revealed, or natural religion. No one will be surpris'd, that the miracles of the Church are set at defiance by a criterion, which does not respect those of *Jesus Christ*, and openly defies the Almighty to work a miracle, which shall not be insignificant and vain towards proving any of the mysterious truths, which a sectary shall chuse to reject: Thus every mystery, doctrine, or rite, which he opposes, is easily reduced to *scandal* or *folly*, according to the scripture-expression; or according, to the modern phrase, to *superstition*, or *absurdity*. Of *superstition*, &c. [g], enough has been said already. Of this supposed *absurdity*, something more in particular must be said, as it is the ground of a main objection from Infidels against the miracles

[f] Ibid, p. 110.

[g] Chap. I. 3. VIII. Chap. II. 3. IX. & seq.

miracles of *Cbrist*, and from sectaries against the miracles of his Church ; for both are attacked by the same weapons, and must stand or fall together.

VII. Many learned Infidels are too ingenuous to deny the evidence of the Gospel-facts, too rational to deprive mankind of their senses, in order to elude the force of testimony. Allowing therefore the evidence of miracles, they contend, that this evidence is defeated by a superior evidence, as the miracles of *Pbaraob's* magicians were by *Moses's* miracles, and their serpents swallowed up by his serpent. This superior evidence, they say, appears in the absurdity of a number of christian doctrines, which cannot be supported by all the evidence of uncontested miracles. They instance in that astonishing doctrine of God made Man, and the alliance of two disproportionate natures in the same Being, of original sin, and inevitable necessity of being thus born and punished by God in all ages : of the sufferings and death of God, the eternal generation of the Word by the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeding from both ; and the unity of nature indivisible in the Trinity of Persons ; all which is but a part of what is proposed to their belief in the Christian symbol. Yet from this only, they judge themselves abundantly authorized to conclude, that all the evidence of facts cannot balance, by an equal certainty, the palpable contradiction of mysteries contained in words, either contradictory, or inexplicable. Here is enough of what they urge, and with equal force, against *Cbrist's* miracles and mysteries, to evince from

what source the objections against those of the Church are derived, and the necessity of comprehending both in the same answer.

VIII. In order to it, I premise first, that this objection, whether from Infidels against the miracles of *Christ*, or from sectaries, against the miracles of his Church, proceeds upon this concession, that the Gospel-facts have all the evidence that historical facts can have, and that the prophetic promises of *Christ* to his Church have all the truth that divine promises can have.

2. That it is essential to Christian faith to be both clear and obscure; so clear in a number of its doctrines, that Infidelity asserts them as *ancient as the creation*; manifest by miracles and prophetic evidence, and obscure in many points of doctrine, impenetrable to human reason, or if you please, apparently contradictory. The question is then, whether the faith of a Christian proceeds rationally, or absurdly and contradictorily, when it pays a due submission to what it does not comprehend, yet scorns ignorance and blind subjection; when it owns the weakness and dependance of the human mind, and still retains a consciousness of its dignity and prerogative; when it occasionally forbids reasoning, but allows and encourages reasoning within certain bounds, urging by strong and convincing arguments, not to extend reasoning beyond them; when it exhorts to bring into captivity every thought *to the obedience of Christ* [b]; yet requires that *our service should be reasonable* [i], that we be ready always to give an

[b] 2 Cor. x. 5.

[i] Rom. xii. 1.

an answer to him that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us [k], and forbids to abandon evidence against all rules of evidence : whether, I say, this faith, tho' humble, and submissive, yet enlightened ; tho' implicit and sincere with respect to mysteries above the reach of reason, yet proceeding on prudent motives, and all necessary information, be in itself an absurdity, and this description of it, a heap of contradictions, is the question reducible to the two following propositions, on the consistency of which it mainly depends.

1. I believe what my reason does not comprehend.

2. I am certain, that in thus believing I follow the impression of sound reason, and cannot be deluded.

IX. If the incomprehensibility and absurdity of a doctrine be synonymous, Deism itself, however simple in its Creed, and more especially the systems of all sects, stand convicted [l] of asserting absurdities in their Articles of Faith. They must then own, that this argument is sophistical with regard to their respective systems. And how often has it been proved such, in every point, in regard to Christianity or the Church of *Christ*? Christianity, says the objection, is false, because its doctrines are more evidently *absurd*, than the facts urged in proof of them, are evidently certain. Here they go counter to all the rules of reasoning, at first setting off. They assume, or beg, do not prove, that

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[k] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

[l] See observations on the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul, p. 102, & seq.

that one evidence can be greater than another. Though this were allowed, when the objects of evidence are of the same kind and order; would it follow, where they are of a quite different species and nature? However tolerable the supposition may be in the first case, it would be insupportable in the latter. The evidence of past facts consists in the continuity of clear and positive testimonies beginning from cotemporary authors. The evidence of speculative truths is quite independent of all testimony, and is grounded only on the mutual coherence and conformity of ideas. There is not then, nor can be, the least foundation for this comparison, and the conclusion from this sophistical argument, is sophistical or absurd.

X. The point assumed, that one evidence can be greater than another, is not only precarious but false, especially when they are of a disproportionate order, as in the present case. For what is evidence, says a learned author [m], already quoted by me? It is the perception, or clear and distinct knowledge that a thing is, and that I cannot be deluded in believing it to be of such or such a sort. It is to me evident, that the whole is greater than its part; that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones; that in a perfect circle all the lines drawn from the center to the circumference are equal; because, apprehending the meaning of these terms, it is impossible for me
not

[m] See Chap. v. Sect. vi. & Tom. iv. of this author, p. 256. & seq. where this objection is answered at large, as it relates to Deists.

not to assent to the truth of these propositions. In the same manner, it is evident to me, that *Julius Cæsar* waged war in *Gaul* and *Britanny*, that *Henry VIII.* and *Martin Luther* introduced a change of Religion in *England* and *Germany*; that I existed myself twenty years ago; because with respect to all these facts, I have so strong, so clear and distinct a conviction, that do what I will, it is impossible for me to withdraw from the power of its evidence. Will you say, that these different truths are unequally clear, or that the first have degrees of evidence which are wanting to the latter? It cannot be said without betraying a gross ignorance of manifest principles. A thing once evident has all the precision, all the lustre suitable to it, which it can have in its order. Could it encrease in clearness, it would cease to be evident, contrary to the supposition; it would be only likely or probable: the mind not thoroughly convinced would be anxious for want of evidence, and withheld by some doubt from giving a full assent.

XI. It is not therefore reasonable to measure two evidences, and pretend, that one exceeds the other. This would be the same as the pretence, that one geometrical circle is more a circle than another of the same kind, that one perfect triangle has its three lines more exact than another equally perfect. Such a one would soon be silenced by this single question. Has the circle, which you hold to be less a circle than the other, all the points of its circumference equally or unequally distant from the center? If their distance is unequal, how came you to call this figure

figure a circle? Do not you see, that it is wanting in that which is essential to every circle, and, that what you say is but an abuse of terms? If their distance is perfectly equal, how can you maintain, that one circle is less so than another, both having the same definition, the same characters and proprieties? The same must be said, in proportion, of every object, which is evident, which being supposed such, it is no longer allowable to prefer one to the other.

XII. Substitute truth instead of evidence, and the absurdity of a position maintaining, that of two certain truths one is more truth than another, will appear immediately. And why? Because truth is an exact conformity betwixt the compared ideas; because there is no truth, where this exact conformity is not; and all propositions, in which it is to be found, for that reason cannot but be equally true. The same must be said of evidence. By this name all knowledge is called, which leaves no obscurity in the mind with respect to the object, which it contemplates. Consequently the pretence that one evidence is superior to another evidence, is the same as to say of two objects, both supposed clear, and void of any obscurity, that one is less obscure than another, an assertion formally repugnant and contradictory in its very terms.

XIII. It may be replied, that there may be certain degrees of evidence and truth in the most unquestionable points. For example, we are not alike satisfied, that *Cæsar* existed, as we are, that the whole is greater than a part of it. Philosophically speaking, it is possible for *Cæsar* not to have existed, and it is absolutely impossi-
ble

ble, that a part should equal the whole. This difference therefore proves, that these two truths are of an unequal evidence. Whoever argues thus, still deceives himself, confounds notions, and draws a consequence from the alledged examples, which does not follow from them. Unquestionably, *Cæsar* might not have existed, and it is impossible in what supposition soever, that the whole should not be greater than its part. But it does not follow from thence, that the fact-proposition is less evident than the speculative. It follows only that the last contains a *necessary* truth, and the other expresses only a *contingent* one. A difference which gives no degree of clearness or conviction above the other [n].

XIV. But is there not more evidence in that which is supported by a variety of proofs, than in that, which is proved only by a single demonstration? Has not a truth a greater sway over the mind, which is perceptible which way soever you turn yourself, than a truth evinced by this single argument alone, suppose it of what strength and solidity you please? Why do men multiply arguments in all their endeavours to convince, but from this intimate persuasion, that a new proof might guide the mind to that point, to which the first had not power to conduct it? I own, it is useful, and even necessary sometimes, to exhibit the same truth to men under different aspects. Not that it becomes more evident thereby, but because the mind, not struck by one reason, may be by another; for all are not equally to be understood, no more than all distempers yield to

[n] See Chap. vi.

to the same remedies, in all constitutions. Nevertheless, the number of proofs adds nothing to the evidence of any article. For no sooner does the argument, by which it is proved, arrive to the pitch of an exact *demonstration*, in the rigor of this term, but the point in question is raised to the highest degree of clearness it can ever attain to. The supernumerary proofs may each of them shine with a lively splendor; but this light was already seen in the first demonstration. These proofs are the reproductions of the same light, if I may so speak; they are not the accretion of it. Divers paths lead to the same term; but a man is not less at his journey's end, tho' the way he came by was not the only one.

XV. Therefore this proposition, *the more perfect evidence is to be preferred to the less*, estimated philosophically, is a palpable contradiction. Far from adopting so false a principle, I maintain that the mind situated between two evident truths, must embrace them both, and that nothing remains in these circumstances, but to seek the means of reconciling them, as it is reduced to admit both indistinctly, altho' this means could not even be discovered by it. The reason is, because no evident point can be destroyed by another evident point. Two evidences cannot hurt each other. Once they are owned and acknowledged, they must subsist, tho' the line of communication, which unites one with the other, be not perceptible. Thus the most sagacious metaphysicians, and the strongest geniusses have judged. I shall cite but three. We have seen this owned in express terms by doctor *Middleton*.

I look upon the discovery of any thing which is true as a valuable acquisition to society; which cannot possibly hurt, or obscure the good effect of any other truth whatsoever: for they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily coincide with each other [o]. This he must have owned, whether he discovered the coincidence or not; which indeed is not discoverable with respect to infinite truths, but by an infinite understanding. It is owned by Mr. Locke in his letter to Mr. Molyneux [p], who, after much thought on the subject, says a celebrated author [q], viz. *how to reconcile the Prescience of God with the Free-will of Man, fairly owns he could not do it, though he acknowledged both; and what Mr. Locke could not do, this author adds, in reasoning upon subjects of a metaphysical nature, I am apt to think, few men, if any, can hope to perform.* It is avowed as a first principle by the great Bossuet. *The first rule of Logic, says this great genius, is never to forsake truths once known, whatever difficulty occurs in reconciling them: on the contrary, you must resolve to hold fast both ends of the chain, though you do not always see the intermediate links by which the chain is continued [r].*

XVI. It is in vain to oppose against this maxim, that there are frequently evident propositions, that are contradictory to each other; and that reason being uncertain as to the choice, and unable to determine itself, is reduced to *Pyrrhonism*, or to believe and maintain at the same time both extremes

[o] Pref. to the Free Enquiry, p. vii. viii. & seq.

[p] P. 509. v. 3.

[q] Observations on the conversion, &c. of St. Paul, p. 104.

[r] M. Bossuet, Traité du Libre Arbitre, chap. iv.

trems of a contradiction. But this imaginary case is impossible. There never has been, or can be, on the same subject, two demonstrations, one of which concludes directly against the other. If the first is evident, there is an absolute necessity against the others evidence. It may indeed seem evident to unattentive minds, to such as a vain appearance seduces, or the glitter of a sophism dazzles, or to such as judge by inclination only. But this imperfect and deceitful evidence is not the thing in question. We speak of that, which sees distinctly its whole object; which neither perceives nor would suffer any cloud around it; that in fine, which leaves a rational being neither doubt, nor suspicion, nor resistance, and which carries with it a necessary acquiescing to what it represents. An evidence of this nature cannot, in any supposition, be balanced by another, so far from being opposed by it; and whoever should pretend the contrary, would either speak against his own light, or not understand himself.

XVII. The known obscurity of our mysteries is what gives rise to this hypothesis, that the evidence of their absurdity is greater, than the evidence of the Gospel-facts. It is true, our mysteries are obscure; they are allowed impenetrable to human minds, and men are taught by us, that they never can comprehend them, until He, who now proposes them to our faith, shall himself unfold them. But there can be no consequence from their obscurity to their absurdity. No *Dialectic* warrants such conclusions; no common sense can say, that what is above reason, is therefore contrary to reason.

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A Bayle [s], and such authors may play off their *Equivoques* in attempting it, but how vainly, has been evidently, and shall be now farther, proved.

XVIII. It is certain, that a proposition cannot be said to be absurd, unless you have a previous perfect knowledge of the ideas it contains [t]. To know, whether these ideas be contradictory, repugnant, and formally exclude each other, you must know their proprieties, and be very sure you know them all : otherwise you are exposed to the manifest danger of deluding yourself. You will take that to be absurd, which seems contradictory in those parts which are understood, and you will not see, in those which are hid, the secret knot, which unites these seeming discordances. Whoever judges of an object without a due and thorough examen of all the particulars, judges rashly ; and if he blunders upon the right, he is obliged to chance, and the discovery is void of merit. We conclude from hence, that to pronounce, whether mysteries be absurd or no, the Infidel must boast, that he knows all their proportions, and has fathomed their whole depth. That is, the Infidel must maintain, that the all perfect Being has no secrets hid from man ; that our feeble lights reach from end to end of the whole of what God can, and will, do ; that it is absurd for the eternal Wisdom to know truths inaccessible to human reason even considered as subject to the influence and power of the senses ; that it is false, that he who is boundless hath views superior

[s] Bayle's answer to the question of a provincial and diction.

[t] J. Toland, Christianity not mysterious.

rior to him, who is bounded; finally, that *incomprehensible* and *absurd* are synonymous; so that to own that the *first* is inseparable from *mysteries*, is to deprive us of every means to guard *them* against the imputation of the *second*. This is what Man must dare to say, before he enters Christian mysteries into the list of contradictions. Let the enemies of *Christ* and his Church put the question to themselves, whether there be nothing in this proud doctrine, which hurts their Reason? If it shocks them, why do they lay down a principle, which leads directly to it?

XIX. I answer secondly, and ask what it is that renders a thing absurd or impossible? It must be, either the union of incompatible proprieties, or the privation of some proprieties, which are essential to it. For nothing that exists, or can exist possibly, can impugn its own principles. Every object must contain what necessarily suits its nature, and nothing but what suits it. Say then, what is the essential propriety of mysteries as mysteries? Is it not to astonish the human mind, and appear absurd to it? God, who in this regard requires of us the sacrifice of our understandings, of set purpose overcasts our Dogmes with this semblance of contradiction, which astonishes us. Were they evidently true, like first principles, the æconomy of Religion would be subverted. We should be no longer guided in the path of obscure Faith, and Christianity would cease to be what it is, what God wills it to be. To judge therefore of our mysteries, whether they be absurd, or not, there need no more than to know,

know, whether they confound our reasoning, whether they seem to shock our natural ideas; for such is the propriety of every mystery, and inseparable from it. Now our dogmes produce this double effect: and incredulity itself is not at all wanting in upbraiding us with it. Why then does it say, that they are absurd? Can they be so for having what suits them, what is essential to them? Is it not rather the height of absurdity to employ that to destroy a thing, which constitutes its very nature; to say that it really contradicts itself, when the appearing to contradict itself is essential to it; to turn into proof against the truth the veil it is covered with expressly to conceal it?

XX. Open your eyes, ye Deists, and judge yourselves. What would you say to him who should deny God's existence, grounded on this only that he did not comprehend the whole extent, and whole infinity of his perfections? Would you vouchsafe to answer him? Or, condescending to his weakness, would not you tell him he deluded himself; that he attacked an *infinite Being* by that precisely which proves it; that from the immensity of his nature he derives a foolish argument against this very immensity; that if he fully and thoroughly comprehended it, it would be no longer incommensurable to his bounds, and consequently there would be no God, no infinite Being? Change but the terms of the question, and from your own mouth will proceed the answer that condemns you. The mysteries, say you, are incomprehensible; they are obscure, they appear absurd: therefore they are impossible; therefore we may, we ought to

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reject

reject the belief of them. I reply: How comes it then, that you in your turn make the nature of an object the formal reason of its impossibility? If mysteries, to be such, must be impenetrable; if it be essential to them to oppress the rash mind that presumes to sound their depth before the time; why do you suppose them impossible for these characters only, which constitute their essence, and without which they would not be what they should be? Well might you talk in this strain, had you demonstrated, that a mystery might be a mystery, and yet evident. But this hypothesis of an evident mystery, is an evident contradiction. Do what we will, we must finally recur to the fundamental nature of objects; and since that of mysteries is to appear contradictory, it is unreasonable to impugn their possibility from seeming contradictions.

XXI. But to render all this still more sensible, let us take a step from the present, and place ourselves in the age in which *Christ* lived. We shall see, that the difficulty now raised was then of no weight, and if so then, it ought to be so now. Let us then imagine to ourselves a man attentive to the new doctrine, which *Jesus Christ* announces to the whole earth. He hears him say, that he is the Messiah, so celebrated by the prophets, long before his birth; that he is the Son of God, the supreme Truth; that he comes to teach all people the unknown paths of Salvation, and reconcile them with his Father, justly irritated against them. This man hears the recital of other mysteries, the detail of which absorbs, and confounds his reasoning. He opposes to *Jesus Christ* requiring the belief of them, the impossibility of believing what

what the mind cannot comprehend ; what is neither clear nor probable ; what is repugnant to that, which after a serious discussion he thinks to be most evident. *Jesus Christ* answers that it is the will of God to guide mankind through the profound obscurities of Faith ; that he requires of them to be like Children, whose simplicity submits to all, even to that which as yet they cannot conceive ; and that he has decreed to give his kingdom to the little ones only, not to the proud of heart elated with their own conceptions.

XXII. This Unbeliever, I will own, could not be fully satisfied with this answer ; for every impostor might alledge the Power of God over his creature, and by so indefinite an argument, authorise the most monstrous system. Neither does *Jesus Christ* confine himself to this reason, insufficient, when alone. He adds that his testimony is nothing, if He by whom he says he is sent, does not enforce it with his own ; and thereupon produces the Prophets so favourable to his mysteries ; but above all the innumerable miracles, the prodigies of every kind, appealing to man's senses ; the irrefragable proof that he is sent from God. As much as to say to this Unbeliever, My doctrine confounds your ideas ; it seems contrary to sound reason ; nevertheless, the Sovereign Being, who has drawn you out of the depths of nothing, and can plunge you again into them ; whose views are more distant from yours, than Heaven is from the deepest abyss of the Earth. He whose Name is Truth, will lead you to him by these seeming absurdities, and forbids all diffidence, all hesitation, as injurious to his veracity. Dare you say, that he ought to proportion

himself to your weak conceptions, or is accountable to you for his designs? Who are you to enter into judgment with him? The only step, the only reasonable one you can take, before you believe, is, to examine thoroughly, whether I speak in my own name, which every impostor may do; or speak in the name and power of Him who cannot lie; which prevents all suspicion of imposture. Now, to remove those, which disturb you on so important a point, I stand to the testimony of your senses; that simple, persuasive, and palpable testimony which results from facts; to that testimony unaccessible to artifice, and the immovable foundation of all human certainty. Where are your sick? Bring them all without distinction; let them draw near, and at my Word they shall be healed. Name them, and tho' absent, I will restore strength to their weakened bodies. Let those come, whom the impure spirit torments, I will command him to depart, and he shall flee from them. Open the graves, and I will break through the horror of them, and in your presence drive death away, and restore light to those, who had lost it. I will die myself, since it is by sacrificing myself that I must save you; yet I will come forth glorious from the sepulchre, and appear again alive in the midst of you.

XXIII. What will this man reply, just now so wavering, or even so indocile? That he will not submit to the divine Authority, because he does not comprehend with evidence the propositions revealed to him? This senseless answer would be more inconceivable, than the thing itself, which he refuses to believe. For in short, it is no sooner certain, that it is God who speaks,
than

than it is as certain, that his Word is truth ; and what opposition soever may be found betwixt the doctrine he proposes, and the sense of man, reason ought to bend under so respectable a Sovereignty. Would this man contest the power of miracles, and maintain the insufficiency of this power to get the better of our opposition ? But he thereby destroys the most illustrious of all testimonies, casts men into inevitable Pyrrhonism, makes the deity accomplice in a lie, robs him of the only external means of shewing the difference of his word from that of false prophets, and knows not himself what he wants or wishes. There would be no end of saying to such a blind disputant : either miracles are from God, or they are from men. If from men, teach us by what art, such limited beings can dive into the secrets of the laws of Nature, and produce effects of which the cause lies so deep. If from God, agree therefore that it is by them he designs to explain himself to us beyond the suspicion of error ; and that he who works them in his name, cannot deceive us by his doctrine.

XXIV. Should he insist, that on one side the miracles which he beholds, appear indeed clear and evident to him ; but that on the other, the mysteries appear to him also no less evidently contradictory : He is answered that the pretended absurdity of the dogmes is the point in question ; that he alledges nothing to prove their contradiction but his impotency of comprehending them ; which proves nought else but the narrow limits of his reason : whilst *Jesus Christ* works prodigies, the evidence of which supplies the want of evidence in the mysteries. In a word,

he is shewed that the apparent absurdity of the doctrines takes nothing from the certainty of the miracles, and quite on the contrary, that the palpable evidence of the miracles, dispels the clouds hanging over the doctrines, and demonstrates their certainty. In fact, God may oblige man to believe what man does not comprehend, without any body's having power to question him: *Why dost thou do so?* But it is impossible for God to work miracles in proof of false doctrines. The doctrine is therefore certain, when it is supported by miracles, and is not on the other side, contradictory to what God has been pleased to make known to us of his Will by natural revelation or otherwise.

XXV. This supposed Unbeliever will add finally that he himself is cast into Pyrrhonism; that if he must distrust his own reason in what it shews him incompatible with it in mysteries, it is necessary that his same reason should doubt also of the evidence it believes it has with regard to the miracles of *Jesus Christ*; that if it can deceive itself in one, it may equally deceive itself in the other; and by depriving him of the privilege of judging on the doctrine, he loses the right of judging on the prodigy. No, you are not reduced to this excessive self-distrust, he might be answered, and you too easily confound what is quite dissimilar. You are not indeed allowed to be the arbiter of the truth of mysteries. And why? Because they are out of your bounds, and it does not become you to decide but where the case is within them; it is superfluous, it is unreasonable to call in the counsel of reason in what is offered only for the exercise of faith; it is lawful for God to reserve to himself some points of knowledge

knowledge, which his wisdom will not communicate to us, during this mortal life; you are rash in opposing his designs on the plan of Religion, which it has pleased him to establish; and to conclude, because by supposing as you do, that all that which is not comprehended by you, is absurd, you yourself follow an absurd principle; since before you pronounce an object to be absurd, you ought to have thoroughly sounded the depth of it, and by your own confession, these mysteries are too deep for your reach.

XXVI. The case is quite different with regard to miracles; they lie in your way, and are within the compass of a common understanding. They are plain facts, and easy to discuss. As they are submitted to the tribunal of reason, they are not less so to that of the Senses. You have sure principles for discerning them, and infallible rules of ascertaining the truth of them. They are given you as grounds of faith, and preservatives against error. They are as the voice of God, who explains himself by them, and has expressly rendered this language sensible, to be more clearly understood. What he takes from you on one side, he restores on the other, but more abundantly. He rids you of the painful and fruitless speculation on dogmes, under which the weakness of the mind would soon sink, and guides you by the road of facts, wherein the mind, notwithstanding its weakness, goes on without risk and trouble. Far then from being forbid to judge of miracles, on the contrary, you are exhorted to it, and the right and privilege of deciding on them is left to you entire. Far from being obliged to distrust your reason here, it is the point in which your reason has not the least cause to fear

delusion. After these answers, what remains for this unbeliever, but to examine the miracles of *Jesus Christ* sincerely, but with the utmost severity of criticism, and this he is obliged to by the rules of strict argumentation and the nature of the debate. His long reasonings on the dogmes are no other than digressions and superfluities, the fact being the only question. Deists therefore acknowledging that the Gospel-miracles are on the level with the most authentic facts in history, are thereby convicted, that whatever they have alledged to prove the absurdity of Christian mysteries, is captious and sophistical.

XXVII. This argument, by which the Infidel is defeated, bears still stronger against sectaries, who, if more than nominal Christians, admit some mysteries of Religion, though they reject others on the weak pretext pleaded by the Infidel, that they are evidently absurd. For, if the miracles of *Christ*, as these sectaries must allow, are abundant evidence of the truth of revealed mysteries, tho' incomprehensible, and a solid confutation of the charge of *folly* and *scandal* brought by *Gentiles* and *Jews* against Religion, and if the same is said by sectaries of the miracles of the Apostles, and their successors, within the compass of their respective periods, what reason can be given, that miracles, which bear the same divine character, and differ in nothing from the miracles wrought by *Christ* and his Apostles, should not be sufficient evidence in whatever age they are wrought, and a convincing argument, that there are no grounds for the wild imputations of absurdity to the mysteries of Religion?

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And till miracles can be stript of their divine character, and shall be proved no-miracles, the rashness of this censure will only shew the sectary more inconsistent than the Infidel. The reason is that the Infidel denies all revealed Religion : with him all mysteries and miracles as well as prophecies and promises are forgery and imposture, whilst the sectary admits mysteries, which he does not understand, as the object of his belief, and worthy of credit, and rejects other mysteries, in which, because he does not understand them, he pretends there are contradictions, tho' they rest on the same foundation with those he professes to believe : whereby he lays himself open to the charge of the most glaring inconsistency. For the vain pretext by which he judges himself intitled to reject some mysteries, and to discard all miracles wrought after the period of his system, will serve equally to prove that the whole of Religion is forgery and imposture.

XXVIII. The charge of absurdity brought from speculative principles by the Infidel against all, and by sectarists against some mysteries is supported by both, with an appeal to the senses, particularly against the wonderful and supernatural change of bread and wine into the body and blood of *Christ*, in the mystery of the Eucharist, which the catholic Church calls *Transubstantiation*. It has been sufficiently proved by the general principles, which have been employed against the Infidel, that he has no reason to reject a mystery, which he does not understand ; and that his not understanding the mystery is a bar against all charge of contradiction brought against it, which can only be grounded on the thorough knowledge of the subject.

subject. But as both appeal to their senses as a foundation to refuse the belief of a *total change of the substance of bread into the substance of the Body, and of the substance of wine into the substance of the Blood of Jesus Christ*, it may not be foreign to a dissertation on miracles to introduce, with the leave of the candid reader, this subject here as far as the appeal to the senses may be urged by Infidels or sectaries against this mystery of Religion. An enquiry into this argument from the senses will shew evidently, that *Dr. Tillotson* had little reason to pretend to a triumph over the catholic Church, in his discourse against Transubstantiation, which may indeed surprise an ignorant rabble, but cannot have any great weight with persons of sober and common sense. It is his main objection; his predecessors *Zuinglius* and *Calvin* urged it in the sixteenth century; and the doctor has set off the argument with a dress and ornaments not so well fitted to the importance of the matter as to the purposes of profane ridicule, not to say more. But words and noise must supply the want of argument, as it plainly appears from the following specimen of his eloquence from the chair (it should have been) of truth.

XXIX. ‘ It might well seem strange, (says
 ‘ the doctor in his discourse against Transub-
 ‘ stantiation) if any man should write a book to
 ‘ prove that an egg is not an elephant, and that a
 ‘ musket bullet is not a pike: It is every whit as
 ‘ hard a case to be put to maintain by a long dis-
 ‘ course, that what we see and handle and taste
 ‘ to be bread is bread, and not the body of a
 ‘ man; and what we see and taste to be wine is
 ‘ wine,

‘ wine, and not blood : and if this evidence may
 ‘ not pass for sufficient, without any farther
 ‘ proof, I do not see why any man, that has
 ‘ confidence enough to do so, may not deny any
 ‘ thing to be what all the world sees it is ; or
 ‘ affirm any thing to be what all the world sees it
 ‘ is not ; and this without all possibility of being
 ‘ farther confuted. So that the business of
 ‘ transubstantiation is not a controversy of scrip-
 ‘ ture against scripture, or of reason against rea-
 ‘ son, but of downright impudence against the
 ‘ plain meaning of scripture, and all the sense and
 ‘ reason of mankind.

‘ It is a most self-evident falshood
 ‘ and yet if it were possible to be true, it would
 ‘ be the most ill-natured and pernicious truth in
 ‘ the world, because it would suffer nothing else
 ‘ to be true, if it be true at all, it is
 ‘ all truth and nothing else is true. For it can-
 ‘ not be true unless our senses and the senses of
 ‘ all mankind be deceived about their proper
 ‘ objects ; and if this be true and certain, then
 ‘ nothing else can be so, for if we be not certain
 ‘ of what we see, we can be certain of nothing.’

He afterwards asks this question : ‘ Whether
 ‘ it be reasonable to imagine that God should
 ‘ make that a part of the Christian Religion,
 ‘ which shakes the main external evidence and
 ‘ confirmation of the whole ? I mean the mira-
 ‘ racles which were wrought by our Saviour and
 ‘ his Apostles, the assurance whereof did at first
 ‘ depend upon the certainty of sense.

XXX. This shadow of an argument is ground-
 ed on a mistake, and is very unphilosophical
 either in an Infidel or a Christian, more particu-
 larly

larly in the latter, because he knows that faith is by hearing [u], and that whatever the case of the other senses may be, it may not be the case of that sense, by which the articles of religion have been conveyed, tho' the understanding of man has not yet apprehended them or been able any way to reconcile them with his narrow notions. The Deist, who allows the creation of this world by the Author of nature, is unable to explain it. He is convinced of the thing, tho' he cannot understand the manner, and is with all the vain attempts of his boasted and mistaken reason at a loss in accounting for infinite other particulars and innumerable difficulties, which arise from the contemplation of created beings. To refute the Infidel and sectary in the mystery proposed here, the general principles deduced above will suffice, by which the mysteries of Religion are clear of all contradiction, and by which it appears that neither Infidel, nor Sectary can object it, to them on account of their ignorance of the terms, which they must totally understand before they can fasten a charge of inconsistency on Christian Religion. They plead the inconsistency because they do not understand the article proposed, whereas their not understanding the mystery bears invincibly against them, and proves that their ignorance is a bar against a contradiction, which they cannot make out. But as to the difficulty brought from sense against Transubstantiation, it will be proper to shew that it is of no weight against that article of catholic Faith, and it shall be considered only in that light in which the Infidel and Doctor last cited place this invincible

[u] Rom. 10.

ble argument. *It cannot be true, the doctor says, unless our senses and the senses of all mankind be deceived about their proper objects* [x].

XXXI. If either Infidel or sectary insist on this argument, they depart from the general sense of philosophers, who do not consider substances as the proper object of sense, but the *modes* and *accidents*, which in some manner cloath the substance, are inherent in it as a *subject* and distinct from the substance. Whatever these *modes* or *accidents*, the appearances under which they apprehend substances, *viz.* of Bread and Wine, may be, they are beings distinct from the substance of Bread and Wine, tho' inherent in their substances. 'Tis true, that generally speaking from these appearances, it may be concluded that the substance of Bread and Wine is under them. Yet it must not be concluded, that the substance of Bread and Wine is the immediate and proper object of sense. Whence it follows, that the doctor, whether he argues as an Infidel or a Christian, has not expressed himself with all the exactness and precision of a Heathen or Christian philosopher, when he speaks of the proper objects of our senses. Tho' here is no design to blame the doctor or the vulgar, who commonly have just reason from the outward appearance of a house, for example, to conclude that what is represented by such appearances is a house, but to shew that strictly speaking not the subject of those external appearances, but the appearances themselves are properly and truly the proper and immediate object of the senses; and that the doctor goes out of the way, when he asserts,

[x] §. 29. last chap.

asserts, (it does not appear that he proves it any where) that our senses are deceived about *their proper objects* in the case of Transubstantiation, as asserted by Catholics, because according to their tenet the proper and immediate objects of sense remain. For it is no false proposition in a Catholic to say that the real colour, taste, &c. of Bread and Wine, which are the proper objects of sense, continue in the Sacrament and affect the senses in their usual manner.

XXXII. To examine the nature of sense still farther, sensations, properly speaking, are only impressions made on the body by external objects, and attended by confused preceptions. The impressions made on the respective organs are purely material. The preceptions are in the mind, as the ideas it conceives from the external impression. These preceptions are mere apprehensions, and as the philosophers speak, neither affirm nor deny, nor rise to form a judgment, but remain simple ideas or images of the objects, which are represented to the understanding, that it may judge of what is proposed. The reason is evident. The preception arising from the impression on the organ is barely the idea, which that external impulse has raised, and consequently as nothing is or can be, properly speaking, affirmed or denied by the affection of the sense, the first preception is resolved into a mere apprehension of the exterior object. But that we may not conclude hence, that no judgment can be formed in this manner of proceeding, it must be observed that upon this preception, and the idea which compleats the sensation begun by the first external impression on the organs of the respective

tive senses, the understanding, when it compares the several ideas, combines others with them, and frequently adds many more than were at first represented. Thus when the motion of a body at a distance is discerned, the idea of a man is formed and perceived in the mind, this body draws nearer, and the perception caused by the impression from the man who approaches, is the perception of a friend and acquaintance. The motion of a body at a distance occasioned the perception of a man, and the man drawing nearer, that of a friend and acquaintance, tho' neither was included in, tho' caused by, the impressions made upon the exteriour organs; and these ideas are added by the mind, and answer precisely to the motion caused in the organs of the senses. Whilst the soul continues in these bare ideas, whether it only considers those ideas which correspond to the external impression, or add more, these simple ideas are not capable of being false. And thus there was no falshood in the visions of the Prophets, tho' the objects were represented as real, or quick and living bodies without any reality of such objects. In general, there can be no falshood in simple ideas, and the character of falshood can only fall on the judgment, which is formed in the mind of these ideas.

XXXIII. Hence it follows, that the sensation begun by the external sense, and perfected in the idea is, strictly speaking, the attention of the mind to the impressions of the body. The protestant divines will not dispute this point of philosophy delivered by St. *Augustin* in several parts

parts of his works [y]. Nor will the Infidel reject the opinions of learned Heathens upon whose authority Cicero says, in the first of his Tusculan Questions, *We do not even now perceive by our eyes, what we see. For there is no sense in the body, but, as the natural Philosophers and Physicians teach, who have seen those things opened and exposed to view, avenues made from the seat of the mind to the eye. And thus frequently with our eyes and ears open, we neither see nor hear, being hindered by some thought that takes up our attention, or by the violence of a distemper. So that it may be easily understood, that the mind sees and hears, and not those parts, which are as kind of windows to the mind* [z].

Tho' Cicero seems to deny all sense in the body, he evidently means, that the perception which compleats the sensation is not in the body but in the mind and is the idea formed consequently

[y] In anima fiunt visiones corporalium rerum quæ sentiuntur per corpus Aug. L. 12. de Genes ad lit. c. 24.

Corporalia quæcunque huic corpori ingeruntur aut obijciuntur extrinsecus non in anima sed in ipso corpore aliquid faciunt. Idem de Musica L. 6. cap. v. & alibi.

[z] Nos enim ne nunc quidem oculis * cernimus ea, quæ videmus. Neque enim est ullus sensus in corpore, sed, ut non solum physici docent verum etiam medici, qui ista aperta & patefacta viderunt, viæ quidem sunt ad oculos à sede animi perforatæ. Itaque sæpe aut cogitatione aut aliqua vi morbi impediti apertis atque integris oculis & auribus nec videmus nec audimus, ut faciliè intelligi possit animum & videre & audire, non eas partes, quæ quasi fenestræ sunt animi. Cic. L. 1. Tuscul. qq.

* *Cernimus animo* : videmus natura. Corn. Fronto in diff. vocab. v. Calep. verbo *cerno*.

frequently to the impression made on a corporeal organ by an external object. But as the external sense neither can think or mistake, decide or judge, it is out of all possibility of error about the proper *object*, where *that* is supposed to be duly qualified to make a proper impression. What this impression is, how it is formed, in what manner the perception takes its rise from the external impulse, may puzzle our Infidels to explain as well as our modern Philosophers. But whatever it is, the perception, which it occasions, is no more than a bare representation, in some manner or other, of the object which affects the sense. And as this perception, which ever way it is understood, is but a mere apprehension, there does not yet appear any danger of error, because hitherto nothing is affirmed or denied, and no judgment is formed. But the mind adds many ideas to this perception, from the comparing of which the mind frames its judgment. When therefore Protestants with Dr *Tilloson* urge, that, if Transubstantiation was true, the senses would be deceived about their proper objects, it would be a sufficient answer to their assertion to say, that the senses judge of nothing, that they neither affirm nor deny, and consequently the immediate perceptions caused by sense cannot be capable of truth or falshood; and particularly, because as the *proper objects* of sense continue in the Eucharist, whereby the senses are affected in the ordinary manner, there can be no deceit about their proper objects, which are truly and really present.

XXXIV. But to come down from philosophical precision to the Primate's argument, let

us allow that in a vulgar and less strict way of speaking our senses may be said to be deceived, when the judgment would be wrong, if it followed, as it usually does, the impression made on the senses. Thus our eyes are deceived, when they see an oar under water. That part under the water appears higher than it really is, and seems to bend upwards; upon which the mind may form two propositions. The first from the appearance to the eye, *that the part of the oar under the water appears crooked*, and this is true; the second, if the mind is determined by the object of the sense, and by the appearance, *that part of the oar is crooked*, which is false [a]. *Even the eyes do not deceive; for they can only report to the mind the impression made on them. If not only the eyes, but all the senses of the body make their report as they are affected, I do not know what more we can require of them.—If any one think, that the oar is broken under water, and becomes whole when taken out, he receives a faithful report from the sense, but judges ill.—Wherefore the eye sees right: for it was only made to see; but the mind judges wrong, &c [b].* This is the lan-

[a] Sed nos ea sensu corporis capimus, ut de his non sensu corporis judicemus. *Aug. lib. II. de Civ. Dei, cap. 27.*

[b] Ne ipsi quidem oculi fallunt: non enim renuntiare possunt animo nisi affectionem suam. Quòd si non solum ipsi, sed etiam omnes corporis sensus ita renuntiant ut afficiuntur, quid ab eis amplius exigere debeamus ignoro.—Si quis remum frangi in aqua opinatur, & cum inde aufertur, integrari, non malum habet internum, sed malus est judex.—Quare oculus rectè videt; ad hoc enim factus est ut tantum videat: sed animus perversè judicat. *Idem de verâ Relig. c. 33.*

language of St. *Augustin*, whereby he shews, that the sense is not deceived about its proper and immediate object, though the mind may form a wrong judgment from a true representation of the object as it appears. The sun, moon and stars appear less than they are, but in these and all other appearances, where it may be pretended, that the senses are deceived, reason comes to our assistance, and discovers the wrong judgment, which the sight of those celestial orbs was no means to prevent.

Though what has been said proves against the eloquent Prelate and modern Infidels, that the senses are not deceived about their proper objects, and that if Transubstantion is true, it does not derogate from other truths, yet something still remains to be deduced to shew clearly how false the inference is, which he makes from a false principle; that this tenet shakes the main external evidence and confirmation of the whole. I mean, says the Doctor quoted [c]; the miracles, which were wrought by our Saviour and his Apostles, the assurance whereof did at first depend upon the certainty of sense.

XXXV. It must be granted, that, although the senses form no judgment, and the sensations, when complete, are mere perceptions that depend upon an impression from an external object, yet this impulse of a corporeal object on the organ of sense is by the disposition of the supreme Being generally attended with a perception, upon which the mind pronounces, and forms a persuasion or judgment, that the external

[c] See § XXIX of this Chapter.

ternal object corresponds to, and is represented by, the perception arising from this impression on the organ by the modes and accidents, that cloath such and such a substance. This judgment, as it is capable of truth and falshood, must be also capable of certainty, without which neither religion nor common life could subsist. This was with great justice objected to the *Academics*, or rather *Sceptics*, who held that all things were uncertain, that reason and truth were changeable, and that a man ought to doubt of every thing, and believe nothing; and this is what Dr. *Tillotson* would persuade Protestants to look upon as a necessary consequence from the dogm of Transubstantiation; but this shall be proved a false and unjust charge against the Catholic Church in the process of the remarks to be made upon this assertion greedily swallowed without proof by Protestants.

Be it then certain, that in the order of nature, and by the will of the Creator, some perceptions are formed in the mind from impressions of external objects, and that the mind has a tendency to judge according to those perceptions and ideas, where there is no just cause for an exception. But now it remains to shew how far these perceptions may be ascertained and depended upon to form a certain judgment.

XXXVI. We may lay down for a rule, that a certain judgment may be formed from these perceptions, where faith and reason does not oblige us to the contrary. Our outward senses are then guides to be trusted, and according to their information we may venture to judge in all cases. But to explain this rule still more,

let

Let it be observed, that the disposition and the conditions of the organ, the distance of the object, and other circumstances pointed out by philosophers, do not suffice. No; the mind must be certainly apprised, *first*, That the perception arises from a real impression made on the organ by external objects, and carefully guard against all surprise from imagination. *Secondly*, The impression or corporeal motion must be after the usual manner, and from an external object, besides which we must be sure, that the organ of sense is not affected by any agency from a strange cause. And, *Thirdly*, We must dwell only on the idea caused by the impression, and add nothing to the idea but what we know is connected with the same.

The first condition is absolutely necessary. The mind frames two different kinds of ideas; some depend upon impressions made on the senses, whereby we conceive the object to be present; others are independent of such impressions. The latter ideas represent absent things, and such as never existed, with as much facility as if the objects were present and real. The two sorts of ideas are often combined together, and confounded, so as not to be easily discerned; for the second sort are frequently so lively and quick, that without reflexion it is difficult for the mind to distinguish them from the perceptions caused by the external sense. *St. Augustin* remarks, that *there are visions, which appear to the mind as if the objects they represent had affected the external senses. This happens not only to persons asleep or frenetic, but frequently to those that are awake and enjoy a full*

presence of mind. There are also visions, which are not caused by the illusion of evil spirits to deceive us, but by a spiritual revelation conveyed by immaterial forms, which affect the mind so strongly, and are so like to bodies, as not to be distinguished, unless God enlightens us with a quicker light and we judge merely by the understanding and abstract from imagination in these cases, which however seldom happens during the visions, but generally after they are passed [d]. Among many others the Acts of the Apostles [e] give us a clear instance to this purpose in St. Peter delivered by an Angel out of prison; he went out and followed him; and wist not that it was true what was done by the Angel: but thought he saw a vision. . . . And when Peter was come to himself, he said: Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his Angel and delivered me out of the hands of Herod, &c. where it is evident, that he did not observe the reality of his deliverance, but was taken up with the vision which affected his mind, till upon reflexion he saw, that what he took for a vision was a wonderful disposition of providence to set him at liberty.

The Necessity of the second condition is as evident. It is not to be questioned, that, if the impression, which is generally the effect of some sensible and corporeal motion, was caused by a sickness, a good or evil spirit, or by God himself, we should certainly have the same perceptions caused in the mind, as if the object, of which

[d] Vid. S. Aug. l. 12. de Gen. ad lit. c. 23. Ep. ad Evod. 101. & alibi.

[e] Acts chap. xii. ver. 9. 11.

which the idea is formed, was really present, so that if God should so move the sense as to cause the *perception* of a mountain, the idea raised from this motion would be truly the *perception* of a mountain.

In fine, the last condition is certainly necessary to prevent mistakes ; that is, not to add any thing to the idea framed upon the information of our senses, which is not necessarily connected with the object, which corresponds to the idea, or which may be naturally or supernaturally separated from the object.

XXXVII. Were it possible for us to be quite uncertain, that these conditions did not generally attend the judgments we form of our perceptions from sense, our judgments would be rash and doubtful. But as the life of man and religion cannot subsist without certainty ; as God has revealed his will, that both shall subsist, we must conclude thence, that he has provided means, whereby man may be assured, that these necessary conditions shall not be wanting to form a proper and true judgment.

Thus, though imaginary visions are not readily distinguished from real sensations caused by external objects, and we cannot perhaps judge with certainty ; yet we are very sure, that providence, after we have made proper reflexions on the ideas, and have no reason to suspect a vision, will not let us be deceived, and take phantoms for realities.

It is the same as to the second condition. Though it is not impossible for several causes to affect the organs of sense, and to produce perceptions of objects not present, these impres-

sions would be followed by the perceptions of those objects as if present. But we are ascertained in the same manner, and the argument, which proves, that God calls us to salvation by the true religion, assures us, that God at least in his ordinary providence will not suffer either good or evil spirits to dispose of our senses in this manner. For having obliged us to judge of sensible things, and his veracity not suffering him to lead us into error, he cannot leave us unprovided of means to come at the truth. Which would be the case, if other causes, as good or evil spirits, occasioned sensations and perceptions of objects as present, which are not so. Whereby all correspondence of civil life and religion, both which God declares he will support, would be at an end.

Lastly, As it would be rash to add to the ideas from sense, other ideas which God can separate though naturally connected, when we are not certain, that he does not act in a supernatural manner; yet when we are assured he does not, there is no rashness in judging upon the representation of those ideas. And this assurance we generally have. God acts supernaturally for important purposes; he gives us either warning before, or a subsequent declaration of these supernatural dispensations. When we receive no such instructions, when there is no reason to imagine, that any thing is done out of the common course of nature, we may without danger add to these sensible *perceptions* all the ideas wherewith they have a natural connection, though God by his power is at liberty to separate them from the objects they represent.

Whence,

Whence, though the persons we converse with, considered under the perception taken from sense, be only bodies that move, that appear under such and such colours, we may safely judge, that they are real men, and not spirits cloathed with bodies that resemble ours.

These are the principles, on which we ground the certainty of the judgments formed in consequence to the impression made by the senses. This certainty does not rest on any natural quality, which preserves the sense from illusion, or on any infallible marks, by which the illusion may be discovered, but on the providence of God, which cannot permit us always to doubt, whilst we are under a necessity not only of judging, but of judging truly of sensible objects. Hence it appears farther, that, where revelation is not concerned, that is, where it does not follow, that we should be under a necessity of forming a false judgment, it is very rash to say, that there are certain things which God cannot permit.

And thus, though visions frequently represent things, which only exist in imagination, though such visions are not always distinguished from the perceptions caused by the impressions made on the organ of sense, God nevertheless may not only permit, but procure and impress them on the mind; for nothing obliges him that has such a vision to judge it true at that time, and God either gives him means to distinguish the vision from a sensation, or hinders him from judging upon the matter, which was the case of *St. Paul*, to whom God did not make known whether he was taken up to the third heaven in, or out of his body [*f*].

If

[*f*] 2 Cor. xii. 3.

If God can permit these things, when he gives but obscure, though sufficient, marks and signs to preserve us from a mistake, who can even suspect, without wilful infidelity, that he can be deceived, when he receives from him such clear and express notice to the contrary.

But nothing, no sign or mark can be clearer or more proper to preserve us from error either by external sense or imagination, than the formal and express declaration of God, which ascertains the truth of things. For, as it has been said, the perceptions by our senses and all those caused by imagination being utterly incapable of error, which can only fall on the judgment, what means can be more proper to preserve the understanding, than to point out with precision, what judgment is to be formed.

XXXVIII. This deduction of common and natural principles shews at once the weakness of the argument brought from sense against Transubstantiation. God is obliged to no more than not to lay us under an indispensable necessity of a wrong judgment with regard to these sensible objects. But the positive declaration he has made, that what appears to us in the Eucharist to be bread is his body, and what appears to us to be wine is his blood, is more than sufficient to preserve the mind from a wrong judgment and an irresistible motive to determine our acquiescency to revelation, and to believe, that it is neither bread nor wine, but the body and blood of Jesus Christ. For as it is not universally true, that what appears to be a man is a real man, no more is it universally true, that what appears to be bread is bread, and what ap-
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appears to be wine is wine. Without several limitations there would be some rashness in those propositions. The organs of sense must be well disposed and without any defect to hinder their functions; the imagination free from disturbance. Illusions from evil spirits must be excluded; we must also suppose, that we have no reason to think, that God exerts a supernatural agency and power. We may be tolerably assured, that there is no diabolical illusion; but what assurance, what certainty can we have, that in the Eucharist there is no supernatural agency, no divine operation, when Jesus Christ in the Gospel declares, that *This is my Body*; and when the universal Church begs of him by her prayers a supernatural operation to change the bread into his body.

To cast a greater light on this subject, let it be observed, that here is nothing of vision or imagination, wherein the senses are not concerned. Here, contrary to the Doctor's assertion, the senses are affected by their proper objects, they act naturally, they have their proper operation. The idea of an external object comes naturally, and is laid before the mind, which excludes all vision and imagination. Neither can there be any illusion of the senses, when they are moved by the true and proper objects of sense, quantity, colour, taste, &c. That (the illusion) can only happen, when the perception is caused not by the proper objects of sense, but some other power or cause that may so affect the sense as to occasion an idea of objects which are not present. In the Eucharist no other power, no strange cause affects the sense with the motion, on which naturally

rally follow the ideas which we conceive. The external and proper object of sense is really and truly present. And whilst the mind merely considers the perceptions caused by the impression on the external sense, and goes no farther, it is not in the least exposed to form a false judgment.

The mind observes first, that the organs of sense are moved, and that the perception, which is caused by that motion, is no imagination; and this is true, — that the senses are affected or moved by an external and their proper object truly present; which is also true, — that the external object is at a certain distance within the compass of a certain figure and of a determinate space, all which is very true, — that the object makes such and such impressions. This it effectually does, — that, if you please, a body is at a certain distance. That is also true; and it may be affirmed, that no part of that space is void of a body, because the body of *Jesus Christ* is there, though in a supernatural and incomprehensible manner; and, if the mind conceive a body in that space without determining the manner it is not deceived in this particular. But if the mind carry the judgment farther, and conclude, that the object is real bread and wine, this determination is not founded on the bare information of sense, nor on the ideas consequent to the impression, but on the ideas added by the mind to the ideas which perfect the sensation. The senses inform us, that in that space there are the appearances of bread and wine. The understanding upon this perception judges it to be bread and wine. The senses report,

port, that the object takes up a space of such an extent, but do not inform how it takes it up. 'Tis the understanding makes this addition. No doubt we ought to be determined by these perceptions, and the judgment formed by the mind consequently to them, when we are rationally answered, that God does not exert a power above nature. But when we are assured he does by his own express declaration and that of the Church, his oracle, which he obliges us to hear and to obey [g]; to follow the perceptions of sense, and to make a judgment which is naturally consequent to them, is wilfully and inexcusably to deceive ourselves; and to conclude, that in the Eucharist what appears to be bread is bread, is great rashness and impiety; this subjects God to a law that he has not imposed upon himself; this is to vindicate not our senses, but our own vain imaginations, and empty pretences to reason against the divine authority of the word of God.

XXXIX. This not only overthrows all the Primate's declamation, grounded on this pretended argument from sense, but gives us a light to understand those passages of Scripture and the Fathers, which are quoted in favour of the certainty of sense. For though they may and must be understood of that precise impressiion or action upon the external sense, which is exempt from error, because it is really incapable of it, and even of the judgment of the mind, which does not go beyond the sensation, or adds no ideas to it; yet, though, according to the Fathers,

[g] Matth. xviii. 17.

thers, it is certain that, when we perceive a body from the impression made upon the eye, we may with reason judge, that there is a body without us, such as is pointed out by the appearance; it is as certain, that they required two conditions, that this judgment may be unquestionable. The first, that there be no illusion; the second, that no supernatural operation of God intervene. For it is evident, that they never pretended that our senses could not be subject to illusion, which they suppose and mention so often in their works, and particularly St. *Augustin* [b], who says, that where the evil spirit deceives us by phantoms, the illusion cannot prejudice us, if we commit no offence against faith or good morals. Nor did the Fathers ever question, that God giving us proper lights, may cause impressions on the external sense, which will occasion the perception of things absent as if they were present, as by the consent of all the Fathers he does in the imagination. There is no more difficulty in one than the other, since neither the perceptions of sense nor the ideas of imagination (being mere apprehensions) are capable of truth and falsehood. It is at least certain, that they did not think it impossible for God to present certain objects to the senses, the perception of which, without a miracle or a supernatural agency, would determine the mind to conclude that to be present under those appearances which really was not.

Thus *Joshua* [i] took an *angel* for a *man*, and asked him, *Art thou for us, or our adversaries?*

But

[b] Aug. de Gen. ad lit. c. 13. 14.

[i] Joshua v. 14.

But when he was told by him, that he was not a man but a *Captain* of the heavenly host, he fell on his face to the earth, and worshipped, and said, *What says my Lord to his servant?* He believed him, notwithstanding the impression made on his eyes, and was assured of the truth of what he asserted. But Dr. Tillotson must find him guilty of going against the evidence of sense, and of committing the grievous sin of false worship so derogatory to true religion. However it is, the sacred text does not reprove him on this account, and though the Doctor suggests, that our senses must be always believed or never; (for if, says he, *Transubstantiation be true, nothing else can be true* [k]) it does not appear, that *Joshua* in consequence of this apparition took every soldier in his army for an angel, or that he mistrusted his senses after that in every common occurrence. Those that saw the blessed Virgin *Mary*, and knew that she had a son and a husband, must suppose, without a miracle, that she became a mother like other women. If God had revealed to the holy women, that they should find at the sepulchre an angel, who appeared like a man, must they believe God or their senses. Those who saw *Jesus Christ*, without a supernatural motive, must suppose him the son of a mortal father, a mere creature. From all which we must conclude against the Infidel and the Sectary, that we must not follow the information of our senses in judging of sensible things without proper limitations, and that they are not infallible guides where an exception

[4] § XXIX, of this Chapter.

exception is justly made against them from a well-grounded faith, or from reason and experience.

This is an abundant and sufficient answer to the pretended difficulty, which has more the appearance of a mistake than an argument, when things are placed in their proper point of view. This answer is almost entirely taken from Monsr. *Nicole*, the true author of the *Perpetuité de la Foi* [1], to which excellent work the reader is referred for farther satisfaction. Reason and experience will shew the Infidel that a wrong judgment may be formed from the information of the sense. The Protestant must allow, that, besides reason and experience, faith and revelation oblige us to believe, that, though we are not deceived as to the proper objects of sense, yet what these objects commonly point out to the mind is not always present, as we have seen in the case of *Josue* taking an angel for a man, and many other instances.

Dr. *Tillotson* was aware of this answer to his *Achilles* of an argument, upon which he objects thus to himself in his discourse upon *The Hazard of being saved in the Church of Rome*, which is the 11th Sermon, p. 204, 1. Vol. of the small edition: 'But cannot God impose upon the senses of men, and represent things otherwise than they are? Yes, undoubtedly. And if he hath revealed, that he doth this, are we not to believe him? Most certainly. But then we ought to be assured, that he hath made such a re-

velation

[1] *Perpetuité de la Foi*, tom. 3. liv. VI. ch. XI.

‘velation, which assurance no man can have, the certainty of sense being taken away.’ Whether the Doctor believed in God, or whatever his notions were of the Divinity, an Atheist would compound with him for such a God as he represents here. The very notion of a God is destroyed. Take away any attribute, the rest fall of course; set his power aside, or, which is the same, set bounds to his power, and he ceases to be God. Though modern Infidels, through prejudice of education, or ignorance, appeal to their senses, it only shews their inconsistency; but when they come to reflect on the perfections, which from natural principles they discover in God, they must allow, that he is all-powerful; that he can make himself understood, when he speaks, and give undoubted assurance, that he speaks. No contradiction appears to the Infidel in the possibility or existence of immaterial and intelligent beings; consequently he cannot comprehend any in their having revelations from God, and assurance, that they are such. If this can be, the generality of persons that are concerned in any way of thinking, are agreed, that the soul of man is an immaterial and an intelligent being, and consequently capable of a revelation being made from God, with sufficient light to ascertain the truth of the revelation and the point revealed, independently of sense. Is it not then a shame for Protestantism, that an Archbishop, a Primate of all *England*, should dare to advance, that God can reveal, and man can not have an assurance of the revelation *the certainty of sense being taken away*? Is not this to fix precarious bounds to his power, and to confine

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fine it by vain and false principles ? To say, as he does, that God *can impose upon the senses of men, and represent things otherwise than they are*; that God can reveal *he doth this*, but that no man can have certain assurance, that he has made such a revelation, is in effect to say, that God can reveal things, but cannot assure us that he has revealed them. If this be truth, what is inconsistency ; what is impiety, blasphemy, irreligion and atheism ?

It is not only the Roman Catholics that look upon this argument from sense as very weak ; many Protestants might be cited, who despise the objection, but it shall suffice to give the opinion of an ingenuous Socinian, in a book intituled *Considerations on the Explication of the holy Trinity*, page 21, where he cites the Bishop of Sarum's discourse concerning the Divinity and the Death of Christ, page 94. The Bishop's words are as follows, ' Transubstantiation must not be a
' mystery, because there is against it the evi-
' dence of sense in an object of sense. For sense
' plainly represents to us the bread and wine to
' be still the same, as they were before the con-
' secration.'

And thus the Socinian speaks his own thoughts about this text of the Bishop's sermon, ' This is
' every way faulty, for it is not pretended by
' the Papists, that the bread and wine have re-
' ceived any the least change in what is the ob-
' ject of sense. The Papists following the phi-
' losophy of *Aristotle*, distinguish in bodies these
' two things, the accidents (such as the quan-
' tity, colour, smell, taste, and such like) which
' are objects of our senses ; and the substance,
' which

' which bears and is clothed (as it were) with
 ' the visible and sensible accidents, is itself invi-
 ' sible, and the object of our understanding, not
 ' of our senses. They say hereupon, our Sa-
 ' viour having called the Sacrament his body
 ' and blood, because our senses assure us, there
 ' is no change of the (sensible) accidents, there-
 ' fore the change, that is made, must be in the
 ' (invisible) substance: which change they there-
 ' fore call Transubstantiation. Nor do they say,
 ' that Christ is corporally (or bodily) present in
 ' the Sacrament, but that his body is present in
 ' a spiritual manner, as Cardinal Bellarmin
 ' largely discourses L. I. c. 2. de Euchar.

' His Lordship therefore is greatly out in pre-
 ' tending, that the Transubstantiation as held by
 ' the Papists is contradicted by sense in an ob-
 ' ject of sense (*m*).

To conclude this digression, which, it is hoped,
 has not been disagreeable to the reader, and to
 sum up the whole, the senses cannot properly
 deceive or be deceived; for as they neither af-
 firm nor deny, they are incapable of judging;
 and judgment only is capable of truth or false-
 hood. In the Eucharist the proper objects of
 sense remain, and affect the organs of sense in
 the same manner after, as they did before con-
 secration. This impression is from the true,
 real and proper objects of sense, and as to the
 senses nothing is altered or changed in the im-
 pression they receive, whereby we are preserved
 from illusion. But though the senses well dis-
 posed

[*m*] *Vid.* N. C. Modest and true account of the
 chief points in controversy, &c. printed 1705.

posed and qualified give a true representation of their proper objects as they appear to them; yet reason and experience shew, that a judgment formed consequently to the impression made on the sense would sometimes be defective, as in the case of the bigness of the sun and the oar in the water. And as Dr. *Tillotson* allows, that God can impose on the senses, and represent things otherwise than they are, and that we are to believe him, when he reveals that he has done so, he concludes most evidently against himself; and what he adds, that no one can have assurance of a revelation *the certainty of sense being taken away*, is only a farther contradiction to natural and revealed truths. On the other side, when the eye sees these words, *This is my body*, in the Bible, or when the sound of those words is heard, the assent to the proposition, which the mind forms on this occasion, is neither given by the eye, nor the ear; neither sense judges. But the eye represents that combination and order of *Letters*, and the ear that *articulated Sound*; and the mind observing these perceptions, compares them with other ideas, weighs the motives of credibility; and upon the conviction, which they inforce, we determine ourselves by our free will, under the influence of divine grace, to accept, as a revealed truth, the assertion, that in the Eucharist what appears to be bread is not bread, and what appears to be wine is not wine, but that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. And what can a believer require more than to be directed by a revelation from God handed to us by his Church,

how

how to judge of what is concealed under the appearances?

From what has been said, it is evident, that it is contrary to natural and revealed truths, to affirm, that God cannot reveal any thing independently of sense. But must we never trust our senses? The Catholic Church has no difficulty in this point. The persons of that communion do not find, that they are abridged of any liberty in this particular. They form their judgment according to the appearances, where reason and experience is not against it; and in this they are directed by common sense: they would form their judgment as directed by the appearances in the Eucharist, if there was not an express declaration from God to the contrary, to which our duty commands an unfeigned assent.

And here must be an end with respect to this pretence to an argument from sense, which can only affect the ignorant vulgar. But it must be very surprising to see persons otherwise of great erudition and abilities setting religion and revelation aside to rest on this broken reed in opposition to truth. But these objections being answered, let us resume our subject, and shew, that miracles have continued in the Church after the periods fixed by their different systems.

C H A P. XI.

I. **W**E are at length come to the chief question in debate, whether miracles subsisted in the Church after those of Christ and his Apostles recorded in Scripture; and if they did, whether they ceased after some of the first ages, or still continue in the Church. That they continued is maintained by the Church, and most Protestants have owned it. Dr. *Middleton* and some few confine them to Christ and his Apostles days, and admit none but what are recorded in Scripture. Those Protestants, who have appeared against him, vindicate the miracles of two or three centuries, but agree with him in giving up all the rest to forgery and deceit. The difference between the contending parties cannot be judged seriously by them to be a matter of any great moment. They differ in the same manner as to the beginning of what they call *Pope y*, or the *Defection*, as they will have it, of the Church from her first purity of doctrine. This causes no wrangling, and is a sign, that they looked upon it as a matter not very interesting. If it was not, whether miracles ceased two or three ages sooner or later cannot be of much consequence. It certainly matters as little when miracles ceased, as when true Christianity gave place to *Popery*. If this is so little regarded by Protestants, though divided in opinions, there is no reason for such high debates about the duration of miracles for the same space of time. And *Middleton* may be a
good

good Protestant, though he confine miracles to the first age, as well as those, who confine pure Christianity to the same period. Nay, it is evident, that if he looked upon the next age as infected with Popery, (he owns he did) he argued well from this infection to the falsity of the miracles in the same age. For what other argument is employed by Protestants against the miracles of later ages? Though some, even Protestants, are of opinion, that all this is but a sham-fight, in which the combatants are not in earnest; and that if the Doctor's adversaries do but appear zealous for the first centuries, and keep up the notion of the novelty of *Popery*, they have their end. Be that as it will, it imports not much. The true Church has a great interest in the glorious evidence, which she has received from miracles. To prove, that they have continued after the precarious and ungrounded periods of our adversaries, will be a solid refutation of their systems; previous to which it is proper to know what light the Scripture affords to this subject.

II. Little or nothing produced by these authors from the sacred books, leaves room to believe they are destitute of any argument from that quarter, or that the sacred page rather gives evidence against them. We have seen the contending parties upbraiding each other [a] for not laying the foundation of their several systems on Scripture-proofs, *on the sacred Records*, without which it has been confessed, that *they cannot form a proper judgment on those evidences which are*

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brought

[a] Introd. § III.

brought either to confirm or confute the continuance of miracles in the Church, and must have disputed consequently at random, as chance or prejudice prompted them, about things unknown to them. Consequently, that Scripture was the only support, on which a regular system of divine miracles could rest, and that this was the most effectual way of settling the *grand point in debate*. But in all that has appeared from the managers on either side, what seems to be the *grand point in debate* to be settled on solid grounds from the Scripture, and to the satisfaction of a *rational Inquirer*, is to determine this important question, What heresy has the best pretence to a proof from the Scriptures? This, indeed, would be equivalent to an attempt to prove from revealed truth, that there is no revelation. Whereupon the disputants, though they object to each other the want of Scripture proofs, have prudently declined an appeal to Scripture in behalf of their systems. Where Protestants take upon them to prove a *negative* article from Scripture, the proof must not only be from Scripture, but from *clear* Scripture. If the text is not clear, the proof must be obscure; the text may admit different interpretations; and as every Protestant is, and must be at liberty to judge of the sense of a text, since he owns no infallible authority in the Church, that can determine the import of the Scripture, contests must be multiplied and last for ever, without any possibility of a proof from the Protestant side.

But as nothing can be alledged from the Scriptures for the cessation of miracles, their subsisting or not subsisting must be examined as
other

other historical facts are; and upon this footing the rational Protestant must allow what is granted on the credit of history. It is not, however, an article of Protestantism, that miracles have ceased immediately after the death of the Apostles, or after the three first centuries. Several learned Protestant authors have asserted the continuance of them after those periods, and continue to look on one another as Protestants, nor do any of them reckon those Protestant authors or other persons to be out of the Protestant communion (if such a number of contending sects may be called a communion) who are persuaded, that miracles subsist even in these later ages.

As it may be taken for granted, that nothing can be brought from the Scriptures against the continuation of miracles, we have too good an opinion of learned Protestants, to imagine, that they will pretend, that the miracles of the Old and New Testament are of any weight to favour them in the present debate. Under the old written law they continued to the preaching of the new. This might be a presumption very favourable to, but no ways an argument against, the Catholic cause; as miracles subsisted in the former dispensation, why not in the latter? The old law was confirmed by miracles, which continued to the last period of the synagogue, why may not a greater and more perfect dispensation be at least equally distinguished with supernatural works of God's infinite power? Again, the old law was peculiar to a certain people; salvation was not for the Jews only. Those, who observed the law of nature were intitled to the same heaven.

heaven. There were some servants of God, who believed in him without being Jewish proselytes. But the law and religion, which our blessed Lord preached was the only one under which salvation was to be obtained; his name the only [b] *name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* And this law and doctrine immediately obliged all to whom it was published. Is it credible, that a law imposed upon one particular nation, without laying any obligation upon others, should continue to be honoured with miracles even to the time that it expired, and the law which God himself came to publish, should be left destitute, so soon after its first establishment, of those distinguishing wonders and signs, which recommended it in the beginning to the world?

III. The promises of our Saviour, clearly expressed in the holy writings, give the greatest advantage in this question. He exerted miraculous powers himself; he communicated them to his Apostles; those gifts were bestowed on his disciples; and he promised them to his followers. Nor were his promises confined to the persons that were present; they were unlimited, and could have no bounds prescribed to them by ruinous systems of human invention. They are as extensive as the faith of those, who believe in him. *Verily [c], verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me, the works, that I do, shall be also do, and greater works than these shall be do.* By these promises we are assured, that miracles shall attend faith and prayer. *Have faith in God. For*
verily

[b] Acts iv. 12. [c] John xiv. 12, 13.

verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe, that those things, which he saith, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them [d]. And our blessed Lord, just before his ascension, and after he had given the Apostles their commission to preach his gospel to the whole world, adds this promise, *These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover* [e]. Where it is very evident, that not the Apostles or disciples only are meant; but that this promise is also made to those whom they shall convert, and who shall believe through their preaching, and this without any limitation with regard to time or persons.

It is needless to go through many other passages of the Scripture, where miracles are promised, and every thing is made possible to those who believe. The promises, as has been just observed, are unlimited; and no one is excepted, who has that faith, which engages God to fulfil his promise. But as the promises are made to true believers, it is not to be wondered that miracles should not be common where faith generally is very weak, charity grows cold, and the world is fallen into a state of remissness and neglect of the important duties of religion, and few

[d] Mark xi. 23. 3, 4. [e] Mark xvi. 17, &c.

few give that attention to their souls, which they have to their bodies. But if that ancient faith, that lively and active virtue, that zeal and fervour animated the world, which formerly influenced the Apostles, Disciples and primitive Christians, it is not to be doubted but that the same wonderful works would be done again, particularly when the conversion of nations is undertaken by apostolical men. And, indeed, it would be a violence to the sacred text to affirm, that the same faith, the same pious confidence would not have the promised effect. Although miracles have not been so frequent as in the first ages of Christianity, God has not left the Church destitute of those signs and that evidence, which he has given to her and to his doctrine. Whatever was the situation of a deluded world, however corrupt its morals, the power of God in signs, wonders and miracles has appeared in every age. His promises stand unrepealed, and as they still subsist, he will continue to bless and reward the faith of true believers with those wonderful effects of his power. That in all ages this miraculous faith has been very observable in several Christian Heroes, and that God has fulfilled his promises, even after the arbitrary Protestant periods, shall be deduced in the sequel of this essay.

IV. But let us previously take a view of the consent and testimony of all ages, and compare the foundation of these infidel systems with the grounds of this belief. This testimony is a fact too evident to be denied. The writings of the Fathers, and Church-history, are full of the relations of miracles wrought in all parts of the world,

world, as far as Christianity extended. Nor do our greatest adversaries dispute it. *As far [f],* says Dr. Middleton, *as the Church-historians can illustrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a single point in all history, so constantly, explicitly and unanimously affirmed by them all, as the continual succession of these powers through all ages. . . . and this by persons of the most eminent character, for their probity, learning and dignity.* This so exactly tallies with the divine conduct from the beginning of the world, and with his promises to his Church, that it makes this universal testimony the easier believed, because expected.

V. An universal testimony, the testimony [g] of *the wisest, the learnedst, the best* of men, is a demonstration of the truth of facts, as much as such can be demonstrated, and facts are susceptible of the most convincing demonstration, of all facts possible; for *if possible*, assents Dr. Church [h], *they may become credible by sufficient testimony.* Nay, there are circumstances, says Mr. Locke [i], speaking of miracles, *wherein they may be fitter to procure belief, the more they are beyond, or contrary to ordinary observation.* That never such circumstances should have happened, no not one, wherein all this testimony could have

[f] Free Inquiry, Pref. xv.

[g] Τα δοκούντα πᾶσιν, ἢ τοῖς πλείστοις, ἢ τοῖς σοφοῖς. καὶ τοῖς αἰσχροῖς, ἢ τοῖς πᾶσι, ἢ τοῖς πλείστοις, ἢ τοῖς μάλιστα γνωστοῖς καὶ ἰσχυροῖς. Arist. Top. l. i. c. i.

NB. This is not only a criterion of what is in itself true, τὰ δὲ αὐτῶν ἔχοντα τὴν πίστιν, but also of what is credible. See Huetii Demonstr. Evang. Præf. p. 3.

[h] Vindic. p. 60.

[i] Essay on the Human Underst. IV. 16. § 13.

have been verified; wherein one of those miracles ascribed to God, was possible, (for if possible, this testimony would have made it *credible*;) not once, I say, for upwards of a thousand years, is what we must believe, if we believe these systems, which forbid us to believe miracles.

VI. The greater a wonder is, the greater is the inclination of those, who saw it, to relate it to others. This is natural to mankind in general. But is it natural to relate when sure not to be believed; to relate what is utterly incredible, what is impossible? This is not natural, this is against reason, which is the light of nature. Had the greatest Infidel, a *Hume*, a *Spinoza*, seen a *Lazarus* rise from the grave at a word-speaking, it would have been natural to relate it; irrational to stand out against the testimony of one's own senses, though absolutely speaking, it is possible for one man's senses to be imposed upon: much more irrational, to stand out against the testimony of thousands, who cannot possibly be deceived, successively, in so many different ages, and different places. Nay, imposture itself only counterfeits what is real. For what is imposture or falsehood, but the exclusion, the negative of truth? It therefore supposes truth. So far therefore from the forgery of many miracles discrediting the truth of all, this conclusion, *some are true*, is evidently deduced from it. So many false prodigies, false religions, false acts, vain predictions, whence do they proceed, but from the imitation of truth, interest seeking to surprize by the resemblance of it? *Had there been no such truth*, says a celebrated

bratad author [k], it would have been next to impossible for men to have imagined it, and much more for so many to have credited it. It is a lively impression of truth, which disposes the mind and lays it open to the surprises of error, nor is it susceptible of fiction, but from a strong and invincible conviction of truth in the same kind.

VII. Why, therefore, is this great testimony of miracles not to be believed? Some other reason must be given than the incredibility of miracles: to wit, that these miracles are opposed by greater miracles, or better witnessed, *i. e.* by those of *Christ* and the *Apostles*? or by revealed truths supported by the miracles of *Christ* and the *Apostles*? Or is it because some of these miracles are destitute of sufficient testimony, and are rejected by critics, even Catholics, on this account? Or, lastly, is it because they hurt the *Protestant* cause, and favour *Popery*?

VIII. As to the first, Were this the case, I readily grant it would discredit all after-miracles. But the fact is quite contrary. These miracles are promised by *Christ*, consequently not opposite to his doctrine. They confirm his doctrine as received by constant universal tradition; the only way by which it comes with security and certainty to our knowledge: consequently are an additional proof of what the miracles of *Christ* and the *Apostles* were wrought to prove. And if any of these *after-miracles* are divine in their nature, and so well attested as to exclude all reasonable doubt, (which will be looked into hereafter) no reason can be given why

[k] *Pensées de M. Pascal*, art. 27.

why they of themselves are not a motive sufficient to beget faith.

IX. As to the second, No one pretends, that all relations of miracles are prudently credible, any more than all relations of other facts. But as it is a wild way of arguing: some facts related are false, therefore all relations are false; so this: some miracles are false, therefore all: at which rate of arguing no truth at all could subsist, human or divine.

X. Catholic authors complain of *false miracles* injudiciously related, and injudiciously believed. This is well known to those who have any degree of reading in these matters. But all these authors maintain a continuance of *true miracles* in the Church: and as they inveigh against the *fraud* or *forgery* of some, they stand up as much for the credit, truth, and certainty of others. False miracles meet with no encouragement in the Church. It is too notorious to be denied, that miracles go through the severest examen before they are approved of, and proposed to the world as credible.

XI. As to the third, The opposition of these miracles to all *reforming* systems, is the real ground of all their joint endeavours to discredit them. But if miracles are better grounded than any of these systems, these must give way to miracles, not miracles to them. Now, what is the common ground of every such unmiraculous system? The same as of every *sect*, which has gone out of the Church from the beginning: *Scripture* and *private* interpretation. And how easily systems rise upon this ground, appears by their numbers. Dr. Middle-

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ton says [1], the learned have reckoned up ninety-nine rank heresies in the three first ages. Passing over a thousand years, and all the intermediate sects built on this sectarian ground, let us come to our modern Protestant sects, *Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinian, Hierarchical, Independent, &c. &c.*, who can pretend to number them? Indeed, *George Horn*, a Protestant Professor, then living at *Leyden*, attempted it in his Latin History of the *British Church*, and made them at that time amount to a thousand. As a proof of this fecundity of reforming sects, he is cited by [m] *Prince Ernest Landgrave of Hesse*, in 1663. And the daily increase of such pretenders to reformation is manifest to every eye. What wonder all such sects, being condemned by miracles, should condemn them? But are they not all most evidently self-condemned?

XII. For of all of them, past, present and future, *reforming*, condemning, contrary one to another, all may be false. If one could be supposed to be true, it is impossible to prove it, because their rule of truth, equally proves a thousand other erroneous systems true. But the *Catholic Church*, from whence all these sects originally went forth, (because incorruptible by any, and therefore condemning all their errors;) holds on through the course of ages invariably, uninterruptedly the same, keeping to her ground of *Catholic tradition*. Thus fixed and secure, the impossibility of her varying and erring is as evident,

[1] *Introduct. Discourse* p. lxxxvi.

[m] See this Prince's Reply to Mr. *Drelinsourt*, and the five Protestant Ministers, p. 258.

dent, as the errors, which in all shapes sprout up continually amidst her adverse systems.

XIII. Nor indeed can I think, that any sober dissenter from this Church's faith, convinced, that God has revealed a faith and worship, necessary for the guidance of mankind to future happiness, can persuade himself, that it is consistent with God's divine attributes, goodness and infinite mercy, thus to leave us in the dark, destitute of all other light, and rule of truth, whereby to discover this *necessary* faith and worship, but such a one as equally squares with error, and consequently can be no rule of truth. A passage in a noble infidel author, apposite to this point, I shall produce at full length.

XIV. *Writers*, says this author [n], *of the Roman religion have attempted to shew, that the text of holy writ is on many accounts insufficient to be the sole criterion of orthodoxy. I apprehend too, that they have shewn it. Sure I am, that experience, from the first promulgation of Christianity to this hour, shews abundantly, with how much ease and success, the most opposite, the most extravagant, nay, the most impious opinions, and the most contradictory faiths, may be founded on the same text, and plausibly defended by the same authority, i. e. on the authority of the letter, with their own interpretation. He proceeds: Writers of the Reformed religion have erected their batteries against tradition; and the only difficulty they had to encounter in this case, lay in levelling and pointing their cannon so as to avoid demolishing in one common ruin, the tradi-*

[n] Lord Bollingbrook's Letters on the Use and Study of History. Letter V. p. 179.

tions they retain, and those they reject. His Lordship was no friend to Christianity; so having taken away the Protestant rule, he was for destroying that of Catholics too. But Catholic tradition is not to be demolished by any battery, as has been shewn above. *Each side*, he goes on, *has been employed to weaken the cause, and explode the system of his adversary: and whilst they have been so employed, they have jointly laid the ax to the root of Christianity: for thus men will be apt to reason upon what they have advanced: if the text has not that authenticity, clearness and precision, which are necessary to establish it as a divine and certain rule of faith and practice; and if the tradition of the Church, from the first ages of it to the days of Luther and Calvin, has been corrupted itself, and has served to corrupt the faith and practice of Christians; there remains at this time no standard at all of Christianity.* True: but if the tradition of the Church has ever been *pure*, and demonstratively so, then we have a divine and certain rule and standard of Christianity, viz. Christ's doctrine thus securely conveyed to us. But has not *holy writ* that *authenticity, clearness and precision* suitable to its divine author, and the purposes of its promulgation? Undoubtedly. But that it was not the will of God to deliver it as the *sole* rule of faith exclusive of the *deposited, preached, traditional word*, and of the *living judge* the Church, which he commands all to *hear and obey* under the penalty of divine anathemas, this author demonstrates from the *experience* of the multitude of evils necessarily issuing from the presumption of such a rule. And the Scripture itself demonstrates, that it was not God's design

to give such a Scripture, so *clear and precise*, that the [o] *unlearned and unstable should not pervert to their own damnation*. Whether possible to give us such a Scripture as might not be perverted, is not the question. Under the present providence it would be needless; every end of farther perspicuity being answered by the rule he has given us, *viz. Catholic tradition*.

XV. Our author proceeds: *What if the Church's tradition has been corrupted itself? Why then the consequence drawn must be evident, viz. that either this religion was not originally from God, or else God has not effectually provided for preserving the genuine purity of it, and the gates of hell have actually prevailed, in contradiction to his promise, against the Church. The best effect of this reasoning that can be hoped for, is, that men should fall into Theism, and subscribe to the first proposition. He must be worse than an Atheist, that can affirm the last.* Here we see his judgment of the Protestant rule of faith, and of all systems built upon it: and that, the Catholic rule (*tradition*) failing us, *Christianity cannot be from God*.

XVI. We see also the true cause of irreligion, and infidelity, with all its evil consequences, so much and so justly complained of. The prejudices of education set aside tradition, the sure ground of Christianity. Doubts, uncertainty, endless divisions follow of course: and hence, by this authors way of reasoning, which is obvious, and no ways sophistical, all revealed religion is discarded, and *Theism* looked upon as the only religion to trust to. Nay, a little further

[o] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

ther reflexion carries numbers into Atheism: for if there is a God, he must have a providence; if there is a providence superintending and governing the world, it cannot leave mankind in such uncertainty and inextricable doubts about true religion, the most important concern of man: much less can it permit *Popery*, in their opinion, the worst of all, to have so many advantages over all the rest, in so many *external* marks of truth, and so many *internal*, of piety and good works, which should necessarily follow from a better, not from the worst of religions. Thus true religion is first banished, next God himself out of their belief, and as far as it is in their power, out of the world.

XVI. Some complaints there are of the *increase of Popery*, as well as of *Infidelity*. What wonder, if all are not carried down the torrent; but that some make sober reflexions on a subject of this importance; and looking with an unprejudiced eye upon Catholic principles; the effect they still have and have had, confessedly by the greatest enemies of that religion, for above a thousand years; of unity in the same faith; &c. see that their principles give security of their religion being the same that *Christ* first taught, and that the religion which *Christ* taught, had God for its author? False principles carry into error. Error with its baleful consequences, occasionally carries sober considerate men back into the way of truth; as the sight of a precipice turns back a wanderer into the right road.

C H A P. XII.

I. **T**HE conversion of heathen nations is not only one of the distinguishing marks of the true Church, but also a sure proof, that the miracles employed to compass so divine an end, were true miracles. For as these conversions were foretold by Scripture in behalf of the true Church, and as these prophecies are fulfilled in the Catholic Church only, and chiefly in ages after that of the Apostles; her doctrines proved true, her miracles stand their ground, which no other ways are attacked by sect-systems, but from the presumption of the falshood of her doctrines. The prophetic promises of Scripture relative to the conversion of heathen nations to the Church of *Christ*, consequently the true Church, are like the other promises quoted above for the continuation of miracles through all ages, indefinite or universal, unconfined by any systematic periods of time. Of the great number of such scriptures, I shall produce but few, and then shew how they were accomplished, and continue to be so, in the communion of the Catholic Church, exclusive of all other pretended churches, to this time: Miraculously, I say, accomplished, as is confessed by these opposite systems with respect to the first propagation of Christianity.

II. *Thus speaks the Lord God, by the mouth of the prophet Isaiab [a], Behold, I will lift up mine*
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[a] Mai. xlix. 22, 23.

hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, &c. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers, &c. [b] Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles. [c] The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. [d] Thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought, &c. On which words Luther says [e], Kings shall obey and believe the gospel. . . . The Church is in perpetual exercise of converting others to the faith, for this is signified by her gates being perpetually open. On the prophet Jeremiah [f] Oecolampadius owns, that God speaks here of the eternity of Christ's kingdom. . . . He shall have kings and priests, and that for ever, and not a few, but as the stars of heaven for their multitude. And the notes of the Protestant Bible on Isaiah [g], The meaning is, say these authors, that kings shall be converted to the gospel, and bestow their power and authority for the preservation of the Church [h]. And certainly it was no other than the true Church, which in the prophets [i] is called the mountain of the house of the Lord, to which all nations were to flow. Which was also signified by that stone hewed

[b] Isai. liv. 3. [c] Ch. ix. 3. [d] Ch.

[e] Tom. IV. Edit. Wittemb. f. 234.

[f] Jerem. xxxiii.

[g] Chap. xlix.

[h] See Protest. Apology, p. 265, 514.

[i] Isai. ii. Micah iv.

hewed out of the mountain without hands [k], which grew up into a great mountain, and filled the whole earth, which the prophet interprets [l] of a kingdom that should subdue all other kingdoms, and stand for ever. For further proofs from Scripture of this point, see *the Grounds of the old Religion* [m], and the following brief deduction, from the same author, of the successive conversions of heathen nations through all ages, accomplishing these prophecies.

‘ III. In the first age we find the great success of the Apostles preaching, and their disciples, especially of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, the founders of the Church of *Rome*.

‘ In the second, the great conversions wrought in *Africa* and *Gaul*, &c. and of king *Lucius* and his people in *Britain* by missionaries sent from *Rome*.

‘ In the third, the conversion of the *Goths*, and other barbarous nations, at the end of which age, as our systems pretend, true faith, true worship, and true miracles ceased. Nevertheless, the conversion of heathen nations proceeded as well after that period as before.

‘ Accordingly we find in the fourth age the conversion of the *Ethiopians*, the *Iberians*, &c.

‘ In the fifth, St. *Palladius* sent from *Rome* by Pope *Celestine*, about the year 430, converted the *Scots* to the faith of Christ, as may be seen in St. *Prosper* [n] and the *Centuriators* of *Magdeburg*.

[k] Dan. ii. 34, 35. [l] Ver. 44, 45.

[m] Sect. viii. p. 93.

[n] *Prosper adversus Collat. in fine.*

deburg [o]. St. Patrick, sent by the same Pope, converted all Ireland, and by these same Protestant authors [p] is acknowledged to have been a man famous for sanctity and miracles, and to have raised the dead to life, and yet is charged by them with Popery. In the same century, the French, with their king Clodoveus, were brought over to the kingdom of Christ by St. Remigius of Rheims, and St. Vedastus of Arras, two holy Prelates of the Roman communion.

In the sixth century, St. Ninianus, first Bishop of Candida Casa, a Britain, trained up at Rome in the Christian faith, converted the Southern Picts to Christ [q]. St. Columba also, or Columkil, an Irish monk of the famous monastery in the island of Hy, brought over the Northern Picts, or Highlanders, to the Christian religion [r]. This holy man in the celebrating of Easter, innocently followed an erroneous calculation, different from that of the rest of Christendom: but this error, into which he and his companions slipt for want of better information, did not hinder him from being all his life-time a member of that Church, from which the Irish had all received their Christianity in the foregoing age; nor from being honoured by that Church as a saint after his death [s]. In the same century, St. Rupert, Bishop of Worms,

[o] Centur. V. collect. 18. &c.

[p] Centur. V. col. 754, 755.

[q] Bede lib. iii. Hist. c. 4.

[r] Bede ibid.

[s] See the Roman Martyrology, June 9.

Worms, converted the *Bavarians*. And St. *Columbanus*, and his disciple St. *Gallus*, converted *Suabia* [t]. And towards the end of this century, St. *Augustin* the Monk, sent by St. *Gregory the Great*, brought over *Ethelbert*, the most powerful of the *English Saxon* kings, with his people, to the faith of *Christ* [u].

In the seventh century, the light of the gospel was further propagated among the *English* by St. *Paulinus*, who baptized *Edwin*, king of the *Northumbrians*; by St. *Felix*, who converted the *East Angles*; by St. *Birinus*, who converted the *West Saxons*; by St. *Aidan*, St. *Cbad*, St. *Wilfrid*, &c. So that in a short space of time the whole nation was gained over to *Christ*; and no people was more devoted than the *English* to the See Apostolic, from which they received the faith. In the same century, St. *Kilianus*, first Bishop of *Wirtzburg*, an *Irish* monk, sent by Pope *Conon*, converted *Gosbert*, duke of *Franconia*, with his people [x]. And St. *Wilibrord*, an *Englishman*, (ordained Bishop, and sent by Pope *Sergius*) converted the *Netherlands* [y].

In the eighth century, St. *Winfred*, an *Englishman*, commonly known by the name of *Boniface*, ordained and sent to preach by Pope *Gregory II*, converted *Hesse*, *Thuringia*, *Westphalia* and *Saxony*; and is usually esteemed the
Apostle

[t] See Heylin's *Cosmog.* p. 431. and *Atlas Geog.* Vol. I. p. 438. 2.

[u] Bede lib. iib. c. 25, 26.

[x] *Atlas Geog.* p. 438. 2.

[y] *Atlas Geog.* p. 438. 2.

' Apostle of Germany [z]. In the same century,
 ' St. Cyril and St. *Metbodius*, Greeks by nation,
 ' sent by Pope *Hadrian II*, converted the *Scla-*
 ' *vonians*, *Moravians* and *Bohemians* [a]. It was
 ' St. *Metbodius* that obtained leave from Pope
 ' *John VIII* to celebrate the liturgy in the *Scla-*
 ' *vonic* tongue, as appears from the 247th
 ' epistle of the aforesaid Pope [b]. So that it
 ' was a great mistake of the *Atlas Geographus*,
 ' when he tells his reader p. 603, without the
 ' least warrant from history, and contrary to all
 ' kinds of monuments, that the *Bohemian* clergy
 ' having been converted by *Metbodius*, a Greek
 ' Prelate, were a long time before they would
 ' acknowledge the Pope's supremacy; as if *Me-*
 ' *tbodius* had not acknowledged it all his life-
 ' time, as well by receiving his mission and
 ' episcopal consecration from Pope *Hadrian II*,
 ' as by obeying the citation of *John VIII*, and
 ' appearing at *Rome*, to justify his doctrine; by
 ' whom also he was made Metropolitan or Arch-
 ' bishop, and from him obtained the above-
 ' mentioned privilege: all which particulars
 ' are evident from the epistles yet extant of
 ' *John VIII* [c]. In the same century the *Danes*
 ' were converted by St. *Poppo*, first Bishop of
 ' *Arhusen* [d]. The *Goths*, in *Swedeland*, by St. *Si-*
 ' *gifrid*,

[z] *Atlas Geog.* p. 438. 2.

[a] *Martinus Polon.* ad ann. 859. *Æneas Sylvius*
Hist. Boem. lib. i. c. 13. *Martinus Chromerus de reb.*
Polon. *Hist.* lib. 5.

[b] *T. 9. Concil. Labbe*, p. 176.

[c] *Epist.* 144, 145, 247, 263. *Tom. 9. Concil.*
Labbe.

[d] *Heyl. Cosm.* p. 484.

* *gifrid*, an *Englishman*, about the year 980 [e].
 * The *Poles* also and *Prussians* in Part, by St. *Adelbert*, Archbishop of *Prague* [f].
 * In the ninth century, St. *Ansgarius*, a monk
 * of *Corby*, and first Archbishop of *Hamburg*
 * and *Bremen*, general Apostle of the Nor-
 * thern nations, converted *Holstein*, and carried
 * the light of the gospel into *Swedeland* [g].
 * St. *Bruno* and St. *Boniface*, two apostolical
 * preachers of the *Roman* communion, laboured
 * with great fruit in the conversion of the *Rus-*
 * * *sians* of *Poland*. And about the same time
 * the *Moscovites* were brought over to *Christ* by
 * the *Greeks*; *Wolodomir*, the first Christian Czar,
 * being baptized an. 988 [b].
 * N. B. That *Nicholas II.* was at that time
 * Patriarch of *Constantinople*, who was joined in
 * communion with the Church of *Rome*, as the
 * *Greeks* generally were from the time of the se-
 * cond deposition of *Photius* an. 886, till the
 * schism was renewed by *Cerularius* an. 1053.
 * *Le Brun* also informs us, out of Father *Pagi* [i],
 * and *Henschenius* [k], that though the *Moscovites*
 * were converted by the *Greeks*, yet they were
 * four hundred years before they joined with
 * them in their schism and their animosities
 * against the Bishop of *Rome*.

About

- [e] Atlas Geog. vol. I. p. 208.
 [f] Atlas Geog. p. 229 and 248.
 [g] Heylin's Cosmog. p. 484, 501.
 [b] Le Brun's Dissertations upon the Liturgies,
 tom. II. p. 412.
 [i] Ad an. 987, annal. Baron.
 [k] Tom. I. S. S. Maij.

About the beginning of the eleventh century, the *Hungarians* were converted under their king *St. Stephen* [1]. And the *Norwegians* under *Olaus III.* an. 1055, the *English* assisting in the work, says *Dr. Heylin* [m], who adds, that they relapsing for the most part to their former idolatry, were finally regained to Christianity by the means of *Pope Adrian IV.* about the year 1156. The *Islanders* also were converted in this century by *Olaus Trugger the Pious* [n].

In the latter end of the twelfth century, *Courland, Samogitia* and *Livonia* received the faith of *Christ* by the preaching of *St. Mainardus* [o].

In the thirteenth century, *Pope Innocent IV.* sent the *Dominicans* to preach to the *Tartars* [p]. And by apostolic preachers of this order, as well as those of the order of *St. Francis*, many Infidels were converted in divers parts of the world.

In the fourteenth century, *Lithuania* was brought over to the Christian faith, under *Wladislaus Jagello*, about the year 1388 [q].

In the latter end of this century, and the beginning of the fifteenth, flourished *St. Vincent Ferrerius*, who by his preaching and miracles converted about twenty-five thousand *Jews* and *Moors* [r].

[1] Atlas Geog. p. 1635.

[m] Cosmog. p. 484.

[n] Atlas Geog. p. 145.

[o] Heylin. Atlas Geog. p. 262, 263.

[p] Vincent. l. 30.

[q] Heylin's Cosmog. p. 524.

[r] St. Antonin. 3 part. Hist. Tit. 23. c. 8. § 4.

' In the fifteenth century were converted the
 ' inhabitants of the *Canary Islands*, &c. And
 ' the *Portuguese* preached the faith of *Christ* with
 ' great success in the kingdoms of *Congo* and
 ' *Angola* [s]. So far of the times before the Re-
 ' formation; and of preachers certainly joined
 ' in communion with *Rome*. Nor has the hand
 ' of God been shortened in these two last ages,
 ' but has in a great measure repaired the loss,
 ' which the old religion has sustained by the
 ' unnatural rebellion of so many of her children
 ' in *Europe* by the conversions of many mil-
 ' lions of Infidels in all the other parts of the
 ' world.

' In the sixteenth century, *St. Francis Xavier*
 ' carried the light of the gospel to the coasts of
 ' *Malabar*, *Travancor*, and the *Fishery* in the *East-*
 ' *Indies*, to the *Molucca Islands*, and the Islands
 ' *Del Moro*, and *Japan*, converting by his mi-
 ' racles many hundred thousands of these *Bar-*
 ' *barians* to *Christ*. His followers and succes-
 ' sors converted the kings of *Bungo* and *Ari-*
 ' *ma*, &c. So that the church of *Japan* counted
 ' no less than six hundred thousand Christians,
 ' and stood for a long while the shock of the
 ' most violent persecutions, in which innume-
 ' rable martyrs suffered with a piety and con-
 ' stancy not unworthy the primitive times; till
 ' all communication being cut off, and no means
 ' left of any priests coming amongst them, the
 ' public profession of the faith was at length
 ' extinguished. In the same age, the *Spaniards*
 ' having settled themselves in the *Philippine*
 ' Islands,

[s] Heylin's *Cosmog.* p. 996, 998.

Islands, preached *Christ* to the Infidels there with such success, that, according to the modern accounts, there are now ten hundred thousand Christians, some say two millions, in these islands [1]. The missionaries have also made great progress in diverse other parts of *Asia* in these two last ages; as in *China*, where there are great numbers of Christians spread through different provinces of that vast empire; in the kingdoms of *Tonquin* and *Cochinchina*, where there are numerous churches in spite of persecution; in the kingdom of *Madure*, and other provinces of *India* on this side of *Ganges*, where the number of Christians increases daily; in the kingdom of *Tibet*; and in the *Marian* Islands, where the inhabitants now are all Christians. As to *Africa*, the conversions have chiefly been upon the coasts of *Zanguebar*; in the great empire of *Monomotapa*; in the kingdom of *Sierra Liona*, where *F. Bareira*, the *Jesuit*, baptized the king, an. 1607, &c. In *America*, - *Martinus à Valentia*, an apostolical preacher of the order of *St. Francis*, with twelve companions, converted so great a number of the *Indians* in the empire of *Mexico*, that, if we may believe *Thomas à Jesu* [u], there was not one of this number, who had not baptized a hundred thousand between the years 1524 and 1531.

In the same century, *St. Lewis Bertrand*, a *Dominican* friar, eminent for sanctity and miracles, preached the faith to several provinces of

[1] Recueil XI. Lett. 3.

[u] De Conversione omnium Gentium, L. IV. c. 5.

of the Southern continent of *America*, and penetrated into the heart of *Peru*, converting an innumerable number of *Barbarians*. His labours have been seconded by those of many others; so that now the inhabitants of *Terra Firma*, of *New Granada*, of *New Andalusia*, of *Popayan*, and of *Peru*, are in a manner all Christians.

About the middle of the same century, the *Portuguese Jesuits* laid the foundations of a flourishing Church in *Brazil*, which in a short time increased to such a degree as to take in no small part of the inhabitants of this vast country, who are at present zealous Christians. The religious of the same order have also penetrated into the very heart of *Paraguay*, and inviting the *Barbarians* out of their woods and mountains, have both civilized them, and made them Christians. The cross of *Christ* has also been prosperously erected in the great kingdoms of *Tucuman* and *Chili*, where the Bishop of *Imperiali* alone has, according to *Collier's Historical Dictionary*, fourscore thousand *Indians* under his care.

In North *America*, the most remarkable conversions have been made in this last age in *New Mexico* and the adjoining parts, and in *Canada*, or *New France*, where the *French* have omitted no care to bring over the *Indians* to the faith of *Christ*, not to speak of a late settlement in *California*, and many other missions in all other parts of the Infidel world: So that in these our days we see that of the Apostle [x] evident-

[x] Rom. x. 18.

‘ evidently verified in our missionaries, *Their*
 ‘ *sound went into all the earth, and their words un-*
 ‘ *to the ends of the world*; and, [1] *How beautiful*
 ‘ *are the feet of them that preach the gospel of*
 ‘ *peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*? And
 ‘ can any one be so unreasonable as to charge
 ‘ that church with heathenish idolatry, which
 ‘ by her pastors and ministers has every where
 ‘ planted the cross of *Christ* upon the ruins of
 ‘ idolatry?’

IV. One of the most notorious for this *unrea-*
sonable charge has been the late Dr. Middleton,
 who, in the supposition that he was a Doctor of
 some Christianity, has been as notoriously con-
 futed by the author from whom I have the
 above succession of heathen conversions through
 all ages. In the very page where the Doctor
 calls this author *one of the principal champions* [z]
of the Church, (for the public fruits of his piety
 and learning are very numerous) he makes this
 remarkable concession: *That a clear succession of*
miracles, deduced through all history, from the apo-
stolic times down to our own . . . is a proof of all
others, the most striking to all minds, and the most
decisive indeed to all minds, as far as it is believed
to be true. It has been believed true, as we have
 just seen, to the utmost limits of the earth, by
 all these converted nations, and in all ages of
 the Church: and the Doctor, as we have also
 seen [a], has confessed, that *there is no point in*
all history so well attested, or more universally,
 than

[y] Rom. v. 15.

[z] Introd. Disc. p. xli.

[a] See Chap. II. Part. I. §. I, II.

than this continual succession of miracles. The consequence is therefore evident for the continuance of miracles, resting on the same foundation, on which the certainty of any past facts must rest.

V. We have seen already [b] the power of testimony to render facts credible, and even certain, no facts excepted, which are not absurd, and which imply no contradiction. We have seen the grounds of this general maxim, *that we must believe the testimony of men, when the facts testified by them being possible, we can neither believe them Deceivers, or Deceived, without supposing that they are out of their wits.* On this foundation we hold a commerce with all times and all places, and believe, on the testimony of those who were born before us, that men were living before them, and are sure the world existed before our days. This foundation once rejected, all history is no better than a fable, the wisest tribunals decide at random, and no man can have a title to his estate.

VI. The use I make of it at present is with respect to the above concessions of Dr. Middleton, by which he has allowed, that a continuation of true miracles rests upon *immutable and universal testimony*, the greatest proof that facts can have. Therefore, that true miracles have existed in all ages, is not only *credible*, from his own confession, but also *certain*: otherwise we must believe, not what he would have us, that the whole *Christian* world ever since the Apostles, were *Cheats* or were *cheated*; but that all universally

[b] Chap. V. art. XXI.

fally had lost *their wits* till the sixteenth century ; and must inevitably continue in this sad state, if none but such Doctors are to cure them. For infidelity is no cure of folly, both go hand in hand, and increase gradually each to their utmost extremity.

VII. Hence a man resolved to be more witty than all the world besides, rather, to be the only man *in his wits* of the human race, must, consistently with himself, reject all *miraculous* facts however universally attested, the *Mosaic* and *Christian* revelation, our Lord's and his Apostles miracles, the authenticity of the gospel-records : and not content with this, as the grounds of natural religion depend on the certainty of our ideas, and this certainty rests on the *universality* and *immutability* of their evidence or testimony, he must reject that also ; when folly and infidelity will have gone their greatest stretch, for it was a fool indeed, *the fool* by excellence, *who said in his heart, there is no God.* Whereas Christian faith, which is the *wisdom of the Saints*, begins by the testimony of the senses [*c*], *for faith cometh by bearing* ; is preserved and nourished by *bearing* [*d*] the Church's testimony, and lost utterly by rejecting it. The Church herself is manifested by the testimonies of the *Prophets*, by those of *Christ*, and by his promises, fulfilled through every age. *Theistical* or *atheistical* systems, built on the denial of all this testimony, have their foundation deeper laid, not in the folly only of the mind, but in the corruption of the

[*c*] Rom. x. 19.

[*d*] Matth. xviii. 17.

the heart; *They are corrupt*, says the inspired prophet [e], *they are become abominable in their ways*. No wonder, that from such corrupted sources the fool's conclusion should issue, *there is no God*.

VIII. In return for the Doctor's concessions of a series of miracles resting on the best of testimony, we will be content to examine the truth or falshood of them, and join issue with him on his own terms, on the foundation which he himself has laid on purpose to support his own system, viz. [f] *the joint credibility of the facts, and of the witnesses, who attest them*. This whole succession of miracles, for the Doctor to gain his cause, or his adversaries to gain theirs against the Church, must, after the different periods of these different systems, be nought but a succession of forgery and imposture: if some true miracles intervene through this course of ages, the Church gains her cause against all these systems [g]. A forged or true miracle, is equally a fact, and there being no medium, must be the effect of divine power, or of human, or diabolical imposture. Let us then examine the *credibility* of these facts, either as miracles or as impostures.

IX. For this whole series of miracles to be nought but imposture, the imposture must appear *credible*; nay, if I understand the Doctor right, there must be an *inherent* credibility, or characteristic of the imposture, in each particular

[e] Psalm. xiv. 1.

[f] Free Inquiry, Pref. p. ix.

[g] Chap. I. art. II.

lar fact attested : but so far from being credible, the thing is impossible, and to make it credible is beyond the reach of all human testimony. For as we have seen [b], that whatever is possible, may be credible, so nothing that is impossible, can ever become credible. Hence it is impossible, first, that facts open to the trial of our reason and our senses, bearing all the outwards impressions of imposture, should universally, and during so many ages, be mistaken by the Christian world for divine facts, for the testimony of God himself, but in the hypothesis that they had all lost their senses. Secondly, That a proof, owned to be, of all others, the most striking to all minds, and the most decisive to all minds, and believed to be true, should nevertheless be a delusive proof. For as God is the author of our common reason and our senses, and they, when most strikingly and decisively affected and determined, are yet deluded, God himself is the deluder, and our Doctors [i] *Deism is worse than Atheism*. Thirdly, That facts equally affecting the senses and reason of the generality of men, and the same in their effects, should be divine miracles before the close of one century, and at the beginning of another, diabolical forgery. Fourthly, That the conversion of heathen nations to Christianity, either since the death of the Apostles, or since the second or third century, foretold by the prophets, should have

[b] Chap. IX. § II.

[i] Deus si non unus est, non est : quia dignius credimus non esse quodcunque non ita fuerit ut esse debeat. Tertull. contr. Marc. L. 1. c. 3.

have been effected but by miracles of the same nature, as those wrought in preceding ages. — Finally, notwithstanding many other impossibilities occur, it is *impossible* that all these could have been converted to Christianity, without, either *external* miracles, as the monuments of those nations testify, or *internal*, which would render these conversions still the more miraculous. Add only, that as it is *impossible* for that which is beyond the power of Omnipotence to work, to become credible, so it is *impossible*, for *unnecessary, unexpedient, ridiculous or absurd* miracles to be ever possible or credible; so that, whenever these systems, at their several epochs, think by this string of epithets (the joint and whole united strength of many a controversial volume) to destroy the Church's miracles, they must mean, and be so understood for the future, and bound to prove, that they are *impossible*; and consequently that it exceeds the power of the Almighty to work any such miracles, as he did formerly in favour of his Church, after all, or any one of the terms fixed for *their cessation*. But intending to return for the farther illustration of some of these articles, I proceed to the credibility of the witnesses of this imposture.

X. And here I must beg leave to observe, that we need not suppose, that all these witnesses have forfeited their reason and their senses; *that [k] the variety of their principles are neither wholly nor in part concealed; that they are not only reasonably presumed but certainly known.* For the

Doctor

[k] Free Inquiry, Pref. p. ix. x.

Doctor must pardon me, if I cannot prevail upon myself to pay that implicit deference to principles, which *in no cases can certainly be known, being wholly concealed from us*. It has indeed long been disputed in the schools, whether the conclusion can be more certain than the premises, but that unknown principles can convey true knowledge, no one, I believe, before Dr. Middleton, has cared to assert. But the Doctor neither dreaded the consequences, nor ascertained the principles of his system. However he would not have thought himself quite secure in the valuable possession of his favourite privilege of being singular, if he had not spun out this very ingenious discovery into a flat contradiction. Wherefore he takes care in the very next line to inform us, that he is perfectly acquainted with these very same principles; that what cannot be known, but is wholly concealed, is nothing but *crafty and selfish views, dissimulation and deceit, weakness and credulity*. How free the Doctor himself was from any of these imputations, is obvious enough from his extraordinary strength of reasoning in this place; but surely no small share of them is necessary for him who is to take his word for it, that all the miraculous powers are withdrawn from the Church, whilst he himself is so modest as to point out a great and stupendous miracle in his own person. For surely the gift of *tongues* is scarcely more miraculous than the gift of knowing men's hearts; the word of God assures us, that the former has been communicated, though the Doctor seems unwilling to believe it; that the latter, the knowledge of hearts,

of all men's hearts, was ever imparted to men, we have no other authority than that of Mr. Middleton, who assures us he himself was actually possessed of it. Though I am not inclined to rob the Doctor of this so singular a privilege, yet I cannot help asking how it can possibly be reconciled with a total cessation of miracles. For *what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him* [1]? The spirit which searcheth all things, is the Spirit of God.

XI. Nevertheless let us give ear to the witnesses of this universal forgery, on the truth of whose testimony the truth of any one of these systems must depend, after first examining who they are, what they depose, in order to descry what marks of credibility their testimony can bear. Who are these witnesses? In the first place, *Atheists* of every species and denomination: *Theists*, who are but *Atheists* in disguise; *Sects*, *Christian* or *Jewish*, various as the errors of the human mind can be; self contradicting; each one contradicted by all the rest; contradicted and condemned by the universal Church of Christ. *Sects*, which contradicted the miracles of Christ and his Apostles; the miracles of the next succeeding ages; and on the very same grounds, on which succeeding sects must condemn the miracles of *all* succeeding ages; and on which the *rankest* heresies have been, and must be built in all ages; whose authority can be of no greater weight than that of their first founder, however numerous his followers were, for example *Simon Magus*, *Manes*, *Mahomet*,

[1] 1 Corinth. ii. 10, 11.

met, &c. &c. and the great Antichrist himself.

XI. What credible testimony of universal forgery, existing or possible, can proceed from such witnesses? Not more credible than the testimony, which proceeded from the same confederacy of witnesses, by their *representatives*, a *Heathen* President, and his *Heathen* army, *Pilate*, *Herod*, *Caiphas*, *Sect-Pharisees*, *Sect-Sadducees*, &c. a *Christian* and *Apostate* Synagogue; all condemning *Christ's* doctrines as *absurd* or *blasphemous*, all his miracles, as the effects of human or diabolic forgery, and treating his sacred person accordingly. For the truth of one of *Christ's* miracles and of all his doctrine was no less incompatible with the truth of any of their systems, than the truth of all the *Church's* doctrines and any one of her miracles, with the truth of any one sect whatever. All the truth therefore discoverable in such witnesses is this *prophetic* truth [m]: *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? The servant is not above his lord, nor the body above its head.* By one word only of divine truth the falshood of all this testimony is evinced; its *contradictions*, its *disagreement*: [n] *The chief priests, and all the counsel sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death, and found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness AGREED NOT together.* For what agreement can there be in the midst of contradictions but in opposing truth,

[m] Matth. x. 25, 24.

[n] Mark xiv. 55, 56.

truth, betwixt [o] light and darkness, Christ and Belial?

XIII. It was impossible, I said, speaking of divine miracles, that God should work an *unexpedient* or a *ridiculous* miracle. A self-evident truth; for such as is the effect, such must be the cause. Plans of religion of human production must necessarily bear the impressions of the weakness and presumption, the folly and impiety of the inventor; such schemes having no other criterion of truth or error, of what is possible or impossible, fitting or unfitting for God to do, but what squares with their systems. Such words therefore, when abusively applied to the works of God, almighty and incomprehensible, should be understood to import nothing less than what is intended by them, nothing indeed but the folly and impiety of man's inventions. For all the knowledge we have of the things of God, being by faith [p], and this through a glass, and in part only; and the object of faith being revealed truths; the motive, God's authority; the foundation, his veracity and omnipotency, on which his Church is also founded, and declared the depositary, the dispenser, or interpreter of all his revealed truths; and by the same veracity secured from every delusion of men and devils; it follows necessarily, that whatever is beside, or contrary to this faith, and authority, is error, and the most grievous, as well as the most fatal of all errors. It follows also, that whatever is conformable, and

[o] 2 Corinth. vi. 15, 16.

[p] 1 Corinth. xiii. 12.

and appertains to this faith, is of all truths the most infallible and important.

XIV. By this faith we know these revealed prophetic truths. The conversion of heathen nations to the communion of the Church of *Christ*, and the defection of nations from the communion of this Church by heresy and schism. Infinite wisdom and power were required to foresee and accomplish these conversions, whether with external miracles or without them. Infinite, I say, and the more demonstrably so, as these events, depending on the free co-operation of man, could not be brought to pass, but by an almighty power over the heart of man. Miraculous conversions to the Church are miraculous demonstrations of her truth, as defections from her, that are quite natural and unmiraculous, are undoubted proofs of error. We have seen this prophetic truth fulfilled with regard to the Church by a series of conversions and miracles through all ages, one of the external marks of her verity.

XV. Sects also verify the prophecies, and have their external marks of error manifestly impressed upon them by eternal truths, which are visible and manifest to all, by the frequent warnings of the Scripture given to all to guard against them. 1. *They went out of us [q],* says St. John, *but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made MANIFEST.* 2. No less manifest is their seduction than their apostacy: *These things have I written*

ten

[q] 1 Epist. John ii. 19.

ten unto you concerning them that seduce you [r].
 3. Their imposture is no less manifest: They [s] shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ. 4. The extensiveness of this imposture is also manifest: Many shall come in my name . . . and shall seduce many [t]. 5. The prevalency of this imposture is alike manifest: False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect [u]. If it were possible, even the Church also, in which the elect are formed, the same omnipotency and veracity preventing both. Finally it is visible and manifest in their Antichristianism, (for even now, said St. John [x], there are many Antichrists) or the opposition of the spirit of sects to the spirit of Christ, in the pride, obstinacy, and disobedience of every arch-heretic and his disciples, in refusing to bear and obey the Church, which is refusing [y] to bear and obey Christ; in despising the Church, which is despising Christ, and despising him who sent him. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. He that knoweth God, beareth us; he that is not of God, beareth not us [z].

XVI. Here then is that universal imposture and delusion, in the collective body of all sects in general, which nothing but the greatest imposture could attempt to cast on the Church of Christ.

[r] 1 John ii. 26.

[s] Mark xiii. 6.

[t] Ibid.

[u] Mark xiii. 22.

[x] 1 John ii. 18.

[y] Luke x. 6.

[z] 1 John iii. 6.

Christ. The *seduction* of Christian nations from the faith and unity of the Church appears on one side and on the other the *conversion* of heathen nations to that unity and faith. As different as the effects are, so must the cause be. The first could not proceed but from the source of all imposture and deceit; nor the second, but from that of truth and omnipotency. In facts alike depending on the liberty of man's will, and equally foretold by prophecies verified in all ages of Christianity, not to discern the *finger of God* in one, and that of *Satan* in the other, is a blindness parallel to that of the *Jews*, in regard of whom the divine predictions are not more manifestly accomplished. What then must that blindness be, after acknowledging the *Messiah* in the person of *Jesus Christ*, to discover no other Church of his upon earth, soon after the Apostles death down to the sixteenth century, but which falsified all the prophecies of the Old and promises of the New Testament, and instead of being the *pillar and ground of truth*, could be no other than the *synagogue of Satan*.

XVII. Infinite power, we have seen, was required to convert heathen nations to the faith of Christ. All these systems allow, for a while, the miracles related in the accounts of these conversions. Their mutual contest is, for how long a while. It remains now to be proved, that the effect, in whatever time it happened, being the same, the cause must be so too: if once supernatural or miraculous, the cause must always be so, *supernatural* or *miraculous*, with regard to the conviction of these systems: for once allowing the necessity and concurrence of supernatural

natural grace in working these conversions, they must allow, not only the work itself *supernatural*, but the Church, to which heathens are converted by God's grace, to be the true Church; the falshood of whose doctrines is all along *supposed* by them, in order to prove the falshood of her miracles. And they must farther allow, that God can no more induce to the belief of a false religion by his *supernatural* grace, than by *supernatural* works.

XVIII. Farther also they must allow, what is grounded on the principles of our common sense, and is frequently urged against Infidels by Christian Fathers and Divines; that if Christianity was not propagated by miracles, its propagation without them, would be the greatest of all miracles. This would be the [a] *grande miraculum*, the eminently great miracle of St. *Augustin*, the [b] *signis omnibus mirabilis* of St. *Thomas*, of all the miracles the greatest, *had the world*, says this great Doctor, *been brought to the belief of things so hard to believe, to the practice of things so difficult to perform, to the hope of things so transcending conception and remote from our senses, without wondrous signs, by simple and mean persons*. Not that all the wisdom and philosophy of this world could bear the

[a] Hoc nobis unum grande miraculum sufficit, quod eam terrarum orbis sine ullis miraculis credidit. *Augustin. de Civ. Dei, L. XXII. c. v.*

[b] Effet omnibus signis mirabilis, si ad credendum tam ardua, ad operandum tam difficilia, & ad sperandum tam alta, mundus absque mirabilibus signis inductus fuisset; a simplicibus & ignomilibus hominibus. *S. Thom. contr. Gent. L. I. c. 6.*

the least proportion to so divine an effect; for neither the eloquence of *Greece* or *Rome* could root out one heathen vice from one single village, nor establish one Christian virtue: but with respect to human judgment, the more devoid of human literature the Apostles were, however replenished with divine wisdom, the success of their preaching appeared the more marvelous. This wisdom was from on high, as supernatural as the effect: *Christ sent me to preach*, says St. Paul [c], *not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* [d] *My preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of power*, the continuance of which in the Church we shall now proceed to shew still subsisting after the periods fixed by the several systems, which are here undertaken to be refuted.

CHAP. XIII.

I. **T**O prove, that miracles were not wanting in every age would require a discussion perhaps too tedious for the reader. The learned Protestant authors, who have opposed *Middleton* and his confederate Freethinkers have amongst them proved very well the continuance of miracles down to the term assigned by their respective systems. They have shewn great learning and erudition, but all are short in answering

[c] 1 Corinth. i. 17.

[d] Ibid. ii. 4.

swering a main objection of their adversary, which concludes invincibly against them, that the reasons, by which they support the miracles of the first centuries equally support those of all succeeding ages. Not to be too prolix, some ages only shall be insisted upon after most of the periods respectively singled out by our adversaries for the cessation of miracles. And as this nation is particularly interested in the means, by which Christianity was introduced into *England*, it will be proper to begin with that happy event brought about under God by the preaching and miracles of St. *Augustin*, the Apostle of the *English*, and his followers. *Venerable Bede*, who lived within the first hundred years after the conversion of *England*, wrote his ecclesiastical history at the request of *Ceolulph*, king of the *Northumbrians*, a learned prince and encourager of learning. Bishop *Nicholson* believes, from some passages in *Bede*, viz. from his epistle to *Ceolulph*, that others before his time had treated this subject, which they certainly had; and that he followed them. The fact, viz. the conversion of this heathen nation, and by this Apostle, and the miracles, which followed and confirmed his preaching, rest upon the same testimony. The impossibility of attaining this end without a divine miraculous interposition, and the reasons for this interposition then, are the same as had been ever: and the heathen nations converted by this divine testimony, as rationally credited it, as those who believed through the miracles of St. *Peter* or St. *Paul*. As to the testimony of these miracles in particular,

ticular, from *Heathens, Protestants, and Catholics*; I shall be as brief as possible.

II. As for *Heathen* testimony, the kings and people converted by St. *Augustin*, could not possibly give a better testimony of his miracles than by their conversion. The public epitaph, which this converted nation, his cotemporaries, set upon their Apostle's tomb, is an additional testimony, which we thus read in *Steven's* translation of *Bede's* Church-history: [a] *Here rests the Lord Augustin, first Archbishop of Canterbury, who formerly sent hither by the Blessed Gregory Bishop of the City of Rome, and by God cooperating, supported with MIRACLES, reduced king Ethelbert and his nation from the worship of idols to the faith of Christ, and having ended the days of his office in peace, died the seventh day of the Kalends of June, in the reign of the same king.*

Thomas Spot has produced another epitaph, but on no apparent authority but his own. [b] *Stillingsfleet* cavils at this, for the title of *Archbishop* not being then in use, he pretends, in the *Western Church*. But is not *Bede's* use of it, allowed in this *Cambridge* edition from the best MSS. an over-ballance to his cavils? Or, was

[a] *Hic requiescit Dominus Augustinus Dorover-nensis Archiepiscopus, qui olim huc a Beato Gregorio Romanæ urbis Pontifice directus, & a Deo operatione miraculorum suffultus, Ædilbertum regem & gentem illius ab idolorum cultu ad Christi fidem perduxit, & completis in pace diebus officii sui, defunctus est septimo Calendas Junias, eodem rege regnante. Edit. Cantab. cura & studio Joan. Smith, S. T. P. an. MDCCXXII. C. III. p. 82.*

[b] *Orig. sacræ, p. 21, 22.*

was it the use of the *Western*, or any *Christian* Church, (as our hypercritic should prove, to shew the forgery of *St. Augustin's* miracles) instead of forgery, to write *miracles*, instead of *Satan co-operating*, to write, *God co-operating* to reduce a heathen nation, from the worship of idols, to the faith of *Christ*?

III. As for *Protestant* testimony, *Fox* [c] has these words: *When the king had well considered the honest conversation of their life, (St. Augustin's and his companions) and moved by the miracles wrought through God's hand by them, he heard them more gladly;* in the margin he puts [d], *Miracles wrought by God for the conversion of this land.* He mentions *St. Gregory's* letter testifying *St. Augustin's* miracles, and says, that he was the preacher of sovereign light, and of the true way of righteousness.

Bishop Godwin, in the life of *St. David*, says, *I doubt not but God afforded many miracles in the first infancy of our Church.* Neither would I be too peremptory in derogating too much from such reports, as we see no reason why they may not be true. And further asserts in the life of *St. Augustin*, that he wrought a miracle by healing a blind man in confirmation of his doctrine.

Hollingsbed in *Descript. Brit.* [e] says, *King Ethelbert* was persuaded by the good example of *St. Augustin* and his company, and for many miracles shewed, to be baptized. And again, *Augustin* to prove his opinion true, wrought a miracle by restoring

[c] *Lib. ii. p. 116.*

[d] *Page 118.*

[e] *Page 602.*

storing to sight one of the Saxon nation that was blind. The same is owned by Stow [f]. His miracles are also confessed by the learned Mr. Collier [g].

What eminent Protestants have said of the truth of *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, may also be called a Protestant testimony of the truth of *St. Augustin's* miracles. *Godwin*, in the life of *Tatwin*, Archbishop of Canterbury, says, that *Bede's history is the most ancient that England hath worthy of credit*. The like is witnessed by *Cambden* in his *Britannia* [b], *Inter omnes nostros Scriptores veritatis amicus*. And again, *Bede the singular glory of England, by piety and erudition, obtained the name of Venerable; he wrote many Volumes most learnedly*, *Bale's Testimony* [i], *Fox* in his *Acts* [k], *Stow's Chron* [l], *Cooper's Chron.* [m]. I forbear to mention his equalling him to an *Augustin*, a *Ferom*, a *Chrysostom*.

IV. Catholic testimony for the truth of *St. Augustin's* miracles, is so unanimous and universal in all succeeding ages, that I shall only touch on what was cotemporary with the Saint. But, first, as we have heard something of the Britons testimony from *Fox*, we will hear it also from *Bede* [n], *Saint Augustin*, he tells us, with the assistance

[f] Page 66.

[g] Pref. to his British History, p. 3.

[b] Page 20. Page 670.

[i] Cent. II. c. 1.

[k] Page 127.

[l] Page 93.

[m] Anno 729.

[n] Lib. II. c. II. Nec mora, illuminatur cæcus, ac verus summæ lucis præco ab omnibus prædicatur Augustinus.

assistance of king Ethelbert, drew together, to confer with him, the Bishops and Doctors of the next Province of the Britons and began by brotherly admonitions to persuade them, that preserving Catholic unity with him, they should undertake the common labour of preaching the gospel to the Gentils but they preferring their traditions before all the Churches in the world . . . the holy Father Augustin put an end to this . . . contention, saying . . . let some infirm person be brought, and let the faith and practice of those, by whose prayers he shall be healed, be looked upon as acceptable to God, and be followed by all . . . A blind man of the English race was brought, who having been presented to the priests of the Britons, and finding no benefit from their ministry, at length, Augustin, compelled by real necessity, bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying, that the lost sight might be restored to the blind man . . . immediately the blind man received sight, and Augustin was declared by all the Preacher of the sovereign light. The Britains then confessed, they were sensible, that it was the true way of righteousness, which Augustin taught.

V. It is further to be observed from *Bede* *ibid.* that among these Britons were many most learned men, *plures viri doctissimi*; that it is the testimony of them all, of enemies and of eye-witnesses; that notwithstanding this their opposition, at that time, to St. Augustin, in some points of discipline; yet in king Ina's time, as we are assured by

gustinus. Tum Britones consentunt quidem intellexisse se veram esse viam iustitiæ quam prædicaret Augustinus: sed non se posse absque suorum consensu ac licentiâ prisca abdicare moribus.

by Fox [o], began the right observation of Easter to be kept by the *Picts* and the *Britons*. But Godwin [p] says, it began long before: To him (Theodore) all the *British Bishops*, and generally *Britany* yielded obedience, and under him conformed themselves in all things to the rites and discipline of the Church of Rome. That is, but sixty years after St. *Augustin*. Observe, what authority it was which wrought this compliance.

VI. That *England* was converted to the faith of *Christ* is a fact that none of the modern critics have dared to deny. That this conversion was effected by the co operation of divine grace working visible signs and miracles, is a fact contested by Dr. *Middleton* and some other authors of the modern systems, but affirmed almost universally by the rest of the learned Christian world. What reason the former had for denying this fact we have already seen. Systems grounded on party-principles could only be supported by precarious assertions, and dazzling periods, which, though ill calculated to promote the interests of truth, were yet of excellent use in shewing the abilities and recommending the talents of their authors. They could not all be believed, since they contradicted one another, but still they hoped that their systems would be adopted by many in opposition to the truth, which they all denied. What remains is to examine the grounds that sober Christians have to believe the miracles wrought in the conversion of this nation. And it may be supposed needless to prove;

[o] Lib. II. p. 123.

[p] In Vita Theodori.

prove, that the only authority that can be required for this or any other fact is testimony. Dr. *Middleton*, though, according to his own modest account, particularly gifted himself, will not allow the rest of mankind any other means of attaining the knowledge of events confined to distant ages. Of testimony that of eye-witnesses is the safest and the least liable to error, which begets different degrees of certainty, according to the different number and character of the vouchers. Having just mentioned principles, which no man in his senses will venture to deny, because settled by the universal consent of mankind, I now proceed to shew, that the facts in question are as certain as the best principles can make them. I have alledged the authority of *Venerable Bede*, whose life and writings will always be esteemed by the learned; and Protestants will pardon me for quoting *Gregory the Great* next, who, though a Papist and a Pope, is acknowledged by Protestants as well as Catholics to be an unexceptionable witness, and deserves the first place among the cotemporary writers of St. *Augustin's* miracles. Writing to *Eulogius* [q], Patriarch of *Alexandria*, by whom he had been informed of miracles wrought in *Egypt* at that time, he says, *Both he (Augustin) and they who were sent with him, shine with so great miracles in that (English) nation, that they seem to imitate the miracles of the Apostles, in the signs*

[q] L. VIII. Ep. 30. Tantis miraculis vel ipse vel hi qui cum eo transmissi sunt in Gente eadem coruscant, ut Apostolorum virtutes in signis quæ exhibent imitari videantur.

signs which they work. And writing to the Queen of France, *What*, he says [r], and how great miracles, our Redeemer has wrought in the conversion of the *aforesaid* (English) nation, it is already known to your Excellency. And in his letter to St. Augustin [s], *Rejoice*, that Englishmen's souls are by outward miracles drawn to inward grace . . . diligently examine thyself, who thou art, and how great the grace, which is in that nation; for whose conversion thou hast received the gift of miracles. And in his *Expos. on Job*, quoted by Bede [t], *By good precepts and heavenly words, yea, with manifest miracles also, the grace and knowledge of God is poured into* (English) *hearts.* By which words, says Bede [u], *this holy Father does declare, that Augustin and his company brought the English to the knowledge of truth, not only by preaching . . . but also by shewing them HEAVENLY signs and miracles.*

VII. Protestant testimony in behalf of St. Gregory's virtue and learning, is too extensive to enumerate. *Whitaker* confesses [x], *he was a learned and holy Bishop.* And again, *I confess Gregory*

[r] Lib. IX. Ep. 58. Qualia autem quantaque in conversione suprascriptæ gentis Redemptor noster fecerit miracula operatus, Excellentia vestra jam notum est.

[s] Bede L. I. c. xxxi. . . . Scio enim quod omnipotens Deus per dilectionem tuam, in gente quam eligi voluit, magna miracula ostendit. Unde necesse est, ut de eodem dono cælesti & timendo gaudeas & gaudendo pertinescas.

[t] Lib. II. c. i.

[u] Ibidem.

[x] Contra Duræum, p. 397, 502.

to have been a good and holy man. Godwin [y] joins with him, *A good man, that blessed and holy Father Gregory. This good man, being made Pope, took special care to send preachers into this land. Bale [z] styles him the most excellent of all the Bishops of Rome, for learning and life . . . He reduced the Goths from Arianism to the Church. Bell [a], in his woful Cry, exclaims, Gregory was a holy Bishop indeed. And in his Survey [b], He was virtuous and learned. And again, A man of sufficient credit. Willet, in his Synopsis, A modest and humble Bishop. Humphry [c] attests the same, Gregory surnamed Great, and indeed Great . . . A great man, and endued with many virtues of divine grace. Luther [d], extolling him, says, *The world has in admiration the holiness of Gregory.* Lastly, the famous Jewel, in his Challenge, cries out, *O Gregory, O Augustin, &c. if we be deceived, you have deceived us!**

VIII. Here let any impartial, unbiaffed person consider, what can reasonably be objected to the miracles by which the conversion of this nation was effected. The conversion itself is a fact undeniable, and it wrought such a change in their lives and manners, as demonstrated their sincerity, and full conviction, that what they were taught was the truth. In place of heathenish, barbarous, unrestrained liberty, succeeded such a sanctity and purity of manners,

in

[y] In Vita Augustini.

[z] Cent. I. c. 68.

[a] Page 62.

[b] Page 156, 480.

[c] Jesuitism. part. 2. p. 624.

[d] Galat. v.

in great numbers, as equalled the purity of manners of any primitive Christianity in any converted nation. And it was effected by preachers inferior to none in holiness of life, to all appearance, since the Apostles. This great and wonderful event must have had a cause proportionable. Were juggling tricks and satanic wonders such a cause? If so, then why may it not be said, that these were the means, which brought about the first conversion of all, and that Christianity was a cheat, or a work of *Satan* from the beginning?

IX. Or was this nation converted to a different faith from that, to which other nations, *France, Spain, Germany, &c.* were converted? this is demonstratively false. For *England*, from this its conversion, was in perfect communion with all these Christian Churches. Nay, some of these nations were converted by these our *English* converts. So that if *England* was not converted to the true Christian faith, neither were these many nations since the sixth century converted to it; and the above-mentioned prophecies will be proved false.

X. Infine, since it cannot be denied but that Almighty God might have converted this nation to Christianity by miracles, as it is owned he did other heathen nations at his Apostles preaching; what other proofs can we presume to expect from all the instances of divine providence hitherto known, than what we have already? viz. the good fruits of this conversion, the testimony of this converted nation, ascribing it to the preaching and miracles of their Apostle *St. Augustin*? For, surely, we should not require
a new

a new gospel, an additional Scripture, a new revelation of the acts of our English Apostles.

XI. Before farther evidence be brought for miracles wrought in later centuries, the author of the previous questions, who comes in as an auxiliary to Dr. Middleton's assistance, must not pass by quite unobserved; and the reader will excuse this digression from the order of time to look back to the fourth century and higher, and to consider the method of reasoning, if it may be called so, employed by that writer. He gravely interrogates, *Were those holy and good men, that lived twelve or thirteen hundred years ago, or perhaps a century higher, as little to be credited as these moderns, who certainly are not to be credited? Are those men of old to be put upon a level with such notorious violators of truth as the Jesuits are known to have been [e]? Whether mistaken zeal for Protestantism, or spleen and ignorance have concurred to these calumnies, they cannot give a moderate man any great idea of this gentleman's good breeding or charity. He might with as good reason ask, whether they could be put upon a level with Gregory the Great, Venerable Bede, the Saxon nation, which has been produced giving evidence to the miracles of Augustin and his companions; whether they were to be put upon a level with the vouchers to be brought for the miracles wrought by St. Bernard, or with St. Bernard himself; or from the instances to be made in the sixteenth century, with persons, who swore to the truth of miracles to which they were witnesses. But he goes on thus,*

[e] Previous Quest. p. 20.

thus, Surely, more is due to their characters, and we have positive evidence of miracles done in their times. After this preamble one would expect some true miracles in the fifth and fourth century at farthest. Read on, and you will find, that those holy and good men are stript of their character, and sent by the ingenious author to rank with those notorious violators of truth the *Jesuits*, the witnesses and relaters of the miracles of *St. Bernard*, the venerable historian of the conversion of *England*, &c. and, to their disgrace, with all the Christian world, who have in all ages unanimously asserted the truth and continuance of miracles.

XII. This prodigy, not to say, miracle of a disputant, this veteran in polemics [f], takes an extraordinary way of confuting miracles by laying down, as a foundation, that they were true miracles. Upon this he confutes them by repeating them; but, modest man, he is afraid, that the repetition will be looked upon as a ridicule of those miracles, which ridicule, as the last effort, is the only argument he employs against truth, and from the best of testimony, which he admits against himself, infers, without any testimony, nay, without any reason, the contradictory to what he had allowed before to be certain and undoubted. In this he goes beyond the hero in *Mr. Butler's Hudibras*, who distinguished himself by subtilty of argument on both sides of the question,

*On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change sides, and still confute.*

Thus,

[f] Previous Quest. p. 24, & seq.

Thus, like a profane droll, from the miraculous preservation of the body of St. *Polycarp* amidst the flames, he infers the falshood of the prediction which the Saint had made to his companions of the sentence which the judge was to pass upon him, *to be burnt alive*. But the Church of *Smyrna*, that gives the account of his martyrdom to the Church of *Philome'ium*, and all Churches wheresoever established, was far from discovering this contradiction, and has precluded this sneer, more so indeed, than an objection. For the contrary is asserted in that epistle of the Church of *Smyrna*, a glorious and valuable monument of Church-history, respected by the ancients, received by the learned of all denominations, even *Scaliger* himself, and treated still with due reverence, notwithstanding the impious efforts and vain attempts of some few libertines. And the writers of this precious remain of antiquity commending their Prelate in the relation of his death, as if they designed to obviate this difficulty, say, that he was an *apostolic and prophetic teacher*. . . . *For whatever he said came to pass, or will do so* [g]. But the author chuses from a true prophecy, which he was not willing to understand in the natural sense, to conclude, there was no miracle; contrary to the evidence given by the Church of *Smyrna*, and to the senses of such multitudes of *Jews*, *Heathens* and *Christians*, eye-witnesses to this event. The great fragrancy, which his body emitted within the arch

[g] Διδάσκαλος Ἀποστολικὸς καὶ Προφητικὸς πᾶν γὰρ ῥῆμα ὃ εἶπεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐτελεσθήναι καὶ τελεωθήσεται. Euseb. lib. iv. c. 15.

arch of fire, was a farther appeal to sense. This spoils all. *For it is usual*, he says, *for the bodies of dying and dead Saints to emit very fragrant smells.* But if it is *usual* to God to shew by supernatural signs how sweet an odor the sacrifice of the ardent charity of his Saints is to him, is it usual for any but the profane and the infidel libertine to scoff at these testimonies of his divine approbation? But he goes on from this excess to others; competent witnesses cease to be such; eye-witnesses are not competent witnesses; no, not even St. *Luke* and St. *Mark* can be allowed as competent witnesses of the sanctity and miracles of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* [b]. After these great feats and quick dispatch, St. *Polycarp's* miracles are concluded with *fides fit penes autorem* [i], let those believe the story, who believe the witnesses, i. e. the Church of *Smyrna*, a primitive Church, whose testimony has been credited and respected for so many ages, a congregation of true believers, who zealously kept up to the profession of their religion under the severity of the greatest persecutions.

XIII. This author keeps up to his character and proof against all authority, attacks the miracles of St. *Martin* in the fourth century, and the veracity of his historian with the same spirit of profaneness and ridicule. *Sulpitius Severus* wrote the life of St. *Martin of Tours*, was his disciple, and flourished in the time of St. *Jerom*, with whom he also spent half a year; he was esteemed

[b] Previous Questions, p. 24, 25.

[i] Ibid. p. 32.

esteemed a man of great learning and wisdom by St. *Augustin*, and was particularly acquainted with and respected by St. *Paulinus* of *Nola*, with whom also he kept an epistolary correspondence. This holy man in the beginning of the life of St. *Martin*, with whom he lived, and from whom he had several particulars of his life, makes this solemn protestation, *I intreat those, who shall read it, to believe what I say, and to be persuaded, that I have written nothing that is not well attested and assured.* And in the account which he gives of St. *Martin's* being preserved from the fire in his chamber, he makes use of this remarkable expression, *Now, as the Lord is witness to my words, he himself (St. Martin) told me, that as long as he endeavoured to break open the door, so long the flames raged against him; but that as soon as he had recourse to the sign of the cross, they gave way all round him, and he felt them refreshing like dew, whereas before he felt them burning hot.* 1. Letter to Eusebius.

This grave and judicious author relates many miracles wrought by the Saint, three dead persons raised to life, two before and one after his being made Bishop, to the truth of which last fact he himself was witness; a girl, dumb from her birth for twelve years brought to her speech by the Saint's prayers and putting a little blest oil into her mouth, besides many more. To be short, he says in his third Dialogue, c. 5. that he should judge himself guilty of a crime if he advanced any falshood for the honour of St. *Martin*, and calls *Christ* to witness that he had the miracles related in St. *Martin's* life, either from the Saint himself; or that he was
a wit-

a witness to them himself, or was informed of them by unexceptionable witnesses living at the time he wrote his history. Besides which he gives strong instances in the 8th and 25th chapters of this life, that both he and St. *Martin* were very watchful with regard to miracles, and very scrupulous in admitting or allowing every tale, and guarded with the utmost diligence against all impostures. They knew how to suspect a fraud; they had, in spite of our critics, sense enough to discover it, and both resolution and prudence to prevent its gaining ground.

These miracles met with credit, and, upon the authority of *Sulpitius Severus*, were received by other eminent persons. Another *Paulinus*, sixty-four years after St. *Martin's* death, and forty-four, or thereabouts, after *Sulpitius's* death, wrote six books in verse of the same miracles. St. *Gregory of Tours*, who was miraculously cured by St. *Martin* with the oil of his lamp, composed four books on that subject. The said miracles are also delivered to us in four books in verse by *Venantius Fortunatus*, Bishop of *Poitiers*, who was recovered of an excessive pain in his eyes by the intercession of St. *Martin*, and touching his eyes with the oil of his lamp.

XIV. What does the author of the previous Questions bring to conclude against *Sulpitius's* history, and the truth of St. *Martin's* miracles? The same strain of impious drollery continues; a rare secret to serve every purpose. *It may be questioned*, says he whether *Sulpitius* has quite cleared himself (notwithstanding his appeal to the God of truth, that he writes nothing but truth)
from

from the imputation he then laboured under of telling lies, and perjuring himself for God's glory and St. Martin's; or whether his folly and weakness be not as great as his wisdom and learning [k]. He names no author of this heinous imputation, though he might have brought in the Infidels of Gaul, that remained unconverted, and who, consistently with their infidelity, could no more acknowledge the truth of this apostolical man's miracles, than he can with his. Let him name any witness that can compare with an *Augustine*, a *Gennadius*, a *Paulinus*, who was himself miraculously cured of a film on his eye, attended with great pain, by St. Martin's touching his eye with a sponge [l], and other such witnesses be himself produces in evidence of his knowledge, eminent quality, wisdom, learning, and sanctity. Much less can he find any witness to compare with the converted Churches of Gaul, and the universal Church, which from that time to this has shewn the greatest reverence to this apostolic Saint. And his historian is more deservedly respected for his virtue, than the elegance of his style, which has given him the title of the *Christian Salust*, though he goes beyond the *Heathen*, and joins the greatest perspicuity to the *Salustian* brevity. This extraordinary conclusion gives room for a just remark, that the author of the previous Questions makes as great a *Chimera*, or monster, of *Sulpitius* in the moral, as ever fable introduced into the natural world. And the question is no more about the disjunctive of wisdom

[k] Previous Questions, page 25.

[l] Sulp. Sev. de Vita S. Martini, cap. 21.

dom and learning, or folly and weakness, but whether the same *Sulpitius* was not *equally weak and wise, learned and ignorant*, a good man and a perjured villain. But what is this author himself? Is he a Divine or a Christian; a critic or philosopher? 'Tis humbly apprehended that the specimen given here will not intitle him to any of those denominations.

XV. After taking leave of this author, let us take a short view of the middle space of time in those ages, which are pretended by all these systems to have been without miracles; and come down to the latter end of the eleventh and part of the twelfth century, at which time the great *St. Bernard* flourished; a man of that eminent sanctity, that even the chief pillars of the Protestant Church, *Luther, Calvin, Ménander, Bucer, Oecolampadius*, cannot refrain from extolling him [m]. He is a *Father of the Church*, and even eminent among the *Fathers*. A *Doctor more sweet than milk and honey*. He breaths every where nothing but piety. He is a man of God, a Divine, whose judgment was more exact than that of all those who lived in his days. A pious and holy writer, by whose mouth even truth itself seems sometimes to speak. He is a Saint, and by *Luther* himself placed in the catalogue of Saints. Nevertheless, say

[m] *Luther*. in *Colloq. Conviv. c. de Pat. Eccles.* *Menand.* in *Præf. ad Gnomol. Græc.* *Bucer.* *L. de Concor.* *Oecolamp.* *Act. de Instit. Calvin.* 4. *Instit.* c. 10. §. 17. & seqq. 11. §. 10. *Paulus Æmil.* *Vir. Car. III.* *Thuan. Hist. L. 21.* *Luther. Apol. Resp. ad Argen.* p. 99. *De Votis Monast.* p. 281. *Magdebur. Cen.* 12.

say the Protestant Centurists, *He was a vehement defender of the throne of Antichrist* [n]. Though indeed some sectarists, not quite so self-contradictory, ashamed to have so great a witness against them, whilst they anathematized the other Doctors of the Church, excepted St. Bernard, and thought themselves obliged to publish, that at last he came over to their party.

XVI. The miracles of this Saint and apostolic preacher, for the greatest part, were performed in public, in numerous assemblies, in great cities, and on great occasions; Emperors, Kings, Prelates, and infinite numbers of people were present. Notwithstanding the astonishing austerity of this penitential institution, quite opposite to every inclination of flesh and blood, numbers of disciples of the best quality, and of different nations, and different customs and tempers, attracted by the lustre of his sanctity and miracles, became followers of his discipline.

XVII. We have abundant proofs, even in the Saint's epistles, with what earnestness the greatest Potentates intreated him to send some of his disciples, who multiplied daily, into their several territories, offering to build them monasteries: which accordingly was effected, during the Saint's life, in all parts of *Europe*, and beyond its limits; and afterwards much more extensively. These are, even to this time, standing monuments, of the opinion at least, these nations and princes had of the Saint himself, and of his disciples.

XVIII.

[n] See Renier's Ch. VII. p. 755. *Fuit acerrimus propugnator sedis Antichristi.*

XVIII. Yet *Protestant credulity* will bring, and from these very premises, a quite contrary conclusion from what the Christian world then did; that all this was but the effect of a *cabal* of these *Cistercian* monks and their holy founder, to procure lands and settlements for themselves; a *cabal* of these kings and nations, to divest themselves of their own property, to *increase the interest and credit of that society*. For *nothing is difficult* to the zeal of propagating a *pious fraud*, no more than any thing is impossible to *Protestant credulity*.

XIX. This religious order continued flourishing to the *Reformation* in all now *Protestant* countries, as it still does in the *Catholic*; the world not dreaming of such infernal *cabals*, when prying, clear-sighted *Reformers* drew the curtain, and discovered the imposture. It is true, human nature cannot furnish us with any motive, why men should act in direct opposition to every human appetite, and seclude themselves even from the power of gratifying any; men, formerly of the greatest affluence and dignity, *Princes* of the Church and of the State, and *Sons of Kings* [o], not only enter into this war against their own flesh and blood, but persevere in it unto death, and leave numerous successors to this day following their example in this unaccountable self-denial. It is as unaccountable, I say, without recurring to *supernatural* influence, and

[o] *Henry*, brother to the King of *France*, became *St. Bernard's* disciple, and a monk at *Clairvaux*, and died Bishop of *Beauvais*. Vid. *Godefrid. in vitâ S. Bernardi.*

and the energy of divine grace, as the Apostles immediately following the call of *Christ*, and the first Christians casting their whole substance at the feet of the Apostles, in order to follow him the more perfectly, was to a *Julian* or a *Porphyry* [p].

XX. If the little Christianity, which this *Abaddon* [q] and exterminating spirit has left us untainted with this *caballing hypocrisy*, which must be looked for as far back as the Apostles, (for all their successors have been taken in) were to be judged of by the rules of that discerning *Protestant* criticism, or charity, which penetrates into the hearts of men, and produces motives quite opposite to the appearance of their actions; what will Infidels say less of the Apostles themselves, than what good Protestants say of the succeeding imitators of their lives and apostolical institution? What the Apostle says of himself [r], what the whole *Gospel* and *Acts* deliver to us concerning the Apostles and Disciples of *Jesus Christ*; however justly to be applied to numbers of their followers, viz. *leaving all to follow Christ*, and serving him in *fastings* often,

[p] Arguit in hoc loco Porphyrius & Julianus Augustus, vel imperitiam historici mentientis, vel stultitiam eorum, qui statim secuti sunt Salvatorem, quasi irrationabiliter quemlibet vocantem hominem sint secuti: cum tantæ VIRTUTES tantaque SIGNA præcesserint, quæ Apostolos, antequam crederent, vidisse non dubium est. Certe fulgor ipse & majestas divinitatis occultæ, quæ etiam in humanâ facie relucebat, ex primo ad se videntes trahere poterat aspectu. Hieronym. Comm. in Matth. c. 9.

[q] Rev. ix. 11. [r] 2 Corinth. xi.

often, in cold and nakedness, preaching the gospel to the utmost limits of the earth, in whom [s] truly all the signs of an Apostle were wrought in all patience, wonders and mighty deeds, was true virtue in the Apostles; but in their successors we must believe it rank hypocrisy. But on the same grounds will Infidels stick to say, that what was rank Hypocrisy in their successors, was no true virtue in the Apostles?

XXI. Protestantism indeed leaves us in the dark as to the precise criterion, which should enable us to discern, in actions perfectly similar, and susceptible of, and bearing every appearance of the same motives, what it is that must determine the excess of folly and wickedness in one, and the height of virtue in the other. This should have been the previous Question of Questions to the Free Inquiry, and all the answers to it; previous even to Protestantism itself. Without a certain and fixed rule, adequate to every man's capacity, in this important point, all our judgments, and actions consequent to them, may be erroneous transgressions against the chief of all social duties, charity; and the chief of all Christian virtues, commanding us to judge as we would be judged, to do as we would be done by.

XXII. The life of St. Bernard, as extant at the end of his works, was wrote by three contemporary authors [t], William abbot of St. Thierry, a Benedictine monk of Rheims; by Bernard

[s] 2 Corinth. xii.

[t] He was intimately acquainted with St. Bernard, one of the holiest and greatest personages of the age, as may be seen in his works extant in *Bibliotheca Patrum*,

nard abbot of *Bonnevaux*; and by [u] *Geoffery* monk of *Clairvaux*, the Saint's secretary, afterwards abbot of *Ignny*, and thence removed and made the fourth abbot of *Clairvaux*. In the strictest rigour of criticism [x] none could be better qualified to deliver the truth of facts, being in great part eye-witnesses of what they relate. As for the rest, they had the best authority of cotemporary eye-witnesses, and the facts themselves were of so glaring a notoriety, that if they had it in their will, they had it not in their power to deceive. How could they? Great cities and provinces, and the most eminent personages in church and state then living are named and appealed to for the truth of what they relate. And in effect it was impossible, that *schism* and *heresy*, *vice* and *infidelity*, which had so powerful an opponent in the Saint, should combine with all the *honour*, *truth*, *virtue*, *religion* of the then Christian world, notwithstanding the infinite diversity of their several interests, not only in forbearing to impugn and detect the grossest hypocrisy and imposture, (which is the common

and by the esteem St. *Bernard* had of his wisdom and learning. *Bibl. Patr.* T. 12. V. *Bern. Epist.* 79. 85, 86. & *Apolog. Præf.* & *de Grat.* & *Ab. arbit. in Prozm.*

[v] He accompanied the Saint in all his journeys into *France* and *Germany*, and was an eye-witness of what he writes; was present at the council of *Rheims*, and, at the request of the Cardinal Legate, wrote the history of that council, which was inserted in the councils of *France*. V. *Sirmond. Concil. Galliæ*, t. 3. part. 2.

[x] *Earum propriè rerum est historia quibus gerendis interfuerit is qui narrat.* *Verr. Flac. de Verb. sign.* L. IV, c. 18.

common interest of all men to do) but in delivering both down to all posterity under the most conspicuous characters of sanctity and truth, without any interest at all.

XXIII. This history affirms, as a thing certain and notorious, that in one day, by the imposition of his hands, in a village near the city of *Constance*, in the presence of many witnesses, he restored sight to eleven blind, cured ten maimed, and eighteen lame persons; in *Cologne*, within the space of three days, fourteen lame, three dumb, and ten deaf persons. And that one desirous to note down the miracles wrought by the Saint, after beginning, gave the work over, the multitude of them increasing so prodigiously as to surpass his ability of enumerating them. Such multitudes of all degrees, in so many different parts of *Europe*, *Germany*, *France*, *Italy*, *Flanders*, were witnesses of his miracles, done for the most part under the eyes of thousands, that they were no more questioned in those days, than that there was such a man.

XXIV. Nay, the Saint himself, whose piety and holiness we have seen confessed by the most eminent Protestants, with the confidence of a *St. Paul* [y] writing to the *Corinthians*, and with the like consciousness of the truth; appeals to his own miracles in his letter to the people of *Tbolouse*, the capital of those provinces which the *Albigensian* heresy had so grievously infected,

we

[y] In demonstratione spiritus & VIRTUTE. I Corinth. xi. 4.

We thank God, says he [z], that our stay amongst you, however short, was not fruitless: since the wolves have been discovered by our manifestation of the truth, not by words only, but by miracles. Even when he confesses them, his humility is more admirable than his miracles. I know, says he [a], when they were mentioned to him that these favours are not on account of the sanctity of one only, but regard the salvation of many: that God considers not so much his perfection by whom he communicates them, as the esteem people have conceived of him, thus rendering that virtue recommendable to men which they believe he is possessed of. For these things are not for those by whom they are done, but for those rather who see and come to the knowledge of them. Nor does God give them this power to testify that they are more holy than the rest of men, but to imprint deeper in others the love and desire of sanctity. Thus no share of these miracles belongs to me, persuaded as I am that they are rather to authorise that good which is published of me, than to shew that my life is better than theirs: nor am I favoured to make me the more recommendable, but to make others the more earnest in the pursuit of piety.

XXV. The wolves the Saint speaks of, were in reality *Manichean* heretics, sometimes called *Henricians*, because headed by one *Henry*, an apostate monk, the disciple of *Peter de Bruis*, who had deluded many in those parts, particularly

[z] *Mora quidem brevis apud vos, sed non infructuosa: veritate nimirum per nos manifestatâ non solum in sermone, sed etiam in VIRTUTE deprehensi sunt Lupi. Ad Tolosanòs post reditum suum. Epist. ccxli.*

[a] *Vita S. Bernardi L. III. c. viii.*

larly in the city and neighbourhood of *Tbolouse*. The *Calvinists* pretend to derive their succession from these heretics, and will not own that they were *Manicheans*. But the truth of this is set in so clear a light in the XIth book of the Bishop of *Meaux's* History of the *Variations*, and from the testimony of all the cotemporary authors, that it is impossible to deny it. And much better should they rest contented with their origin from *Calvin*, than go in search of a more shameful pedigree from *Manes*.

XXVI. The Saint's miracles, I said, were generally wrought on great occasions. As when *schism* divided cities and kingdoms from the unity of the Church; when *heresy* spreading its contagion oppugned her doctrine; when charity called for his assistance, to succour his neighbour in grievous calamities, in all places where he passed healing the sick, deaf, lame and blind, preaching up the true spirit of penance and of the cross of *Christ*, not by word only, but by exhibiting to public view an example and a living pattern of it. Then, and then only, did the Saint quit his solitude, at the request, often at the command, of his spiritual superiors, of Bishops, of Popes, of his own Sovereign, requiring obedience of him. So glorious to God, so beneficial to his Church and mankind, was *St. Bernard's* sanctity; so manifestly *expedient* were his miracles, the divine testimony of its truth; so justly has it been always revered by the Christian world! I cannot forbear instancing on each of these great occasions.

XXVII. In that great schism, wherein all the Christian Potentates, together with their Prelates, took

took part, either on the side of *Peter of Leon*, the usurper, or of *Innocent II*, the legitimate Pope, *St. Bernard* was called upon, to procure the peace of the Church, for *he had infinite credit*, says *Du Pin*, and there was no affair of consequence in his time in which he was not employed. He was called to the councils of *Troyes*, of *Chalons*, to the general assembly which the king of *France* convoked at *Estampes*; to the council held by the Pope at *Rheims*, to that of *Pisa* of all the Western Bishops; to *Orleans*, to *Chartres*, where *Henry I*, king of *England*, prevailed upon by *St. Bernard*, met *Innocent*, and at the Saint's persuasion acknowledged him for the true Pope, however averse he, his Prelates and Nobles were before. At *Liege* he had the like success with the Emperor *Lotharius* and his Bishops, notwithstanding he had there strenuously withstood him in his claim to the investitures. In *Italy* he conferred at *Salerno* with *Roger* king of *Sicily*, who still obstinate in the schism, and refusing to lay down his arms and make peace with duke *Ranulphus*, had his total overthrow foretold him by the Saint [b], which happened accordingly. *Milan*, engaged in the schism with its Bishop *Anselm*, was quickly reduced by him to the Pope's obedience. In *Guienne*, all the province was engaged in the same cause; the Bishops of *Limoges* and *Poitiers* were expelled their sees, by *Gerard* Bishop of *Angoulesme*, that was supported with all the power of the duke, who, however obstinate, could not resist God's minister. Finally he was called to *Rome* by the Pope

[b] Si conflictum inieris, victus & confusus abibis.

Pope and Cardinals, to oppose the Antipope, who was possessed of all the fortresses of the nobility, and being upheld by great numbers, whom he had corrupted with his treasures, so terrified the people and the clergy, that they dared not openly withstand him. All these obstacles being surmounted, the schism terminated, and peace restored, as the Saint had foretold, the glory of it under God was ascribed entirely to him; the greatest dignities of the Church were offered to, and rejected by him; and after a stay of five days only to reap the fruit of seven years labour, he returns to his monastery.

XXVIII. *This infinite credit* and authority with all degrees of people, so uniformly supporting itself, so constantly and universally, all these systems must say, was, not the effect of his miraculous sanctity and works, but of the rankest hypocrisy and imposture. This is not sufficient. It was a combination of all these Princes, Prelates, Schismatics, no less than Catholics, with *St. Bernard*, (for the increase of his glory and that of his order) to delude themselves, and act counter to the variety of their several interests and inclinations. For example, such must have been the combination of the schismatic people of *Milan* with their nobility and clergy, when they left their city empty, and all went seven miles to meet the Saint, craved his blessing prostrate on the ground, and kissing his feet, and were not to be withheld from all the external testimonies of love, reverence, honour, which could be shewn to a mortal man. For this they brought to him all their sick, lame, blind, paralytic, energumens, in public, or in
the

the midst of the solemn service in their great cathedral of St. *Ambrose*, crowded with spectators; shouted for joy, rang all the bells of the city, proclaimed every where the miraculous gift of God's minister, in healing their infirm, and delivering their possessed, by the efficacy of his prayer and blessing [c]. Or must we say with Dr. *Middleton*, and what he affirms concerning the primitive dæmoniacks and their exorcists, that the *Milanese* kept these wretches in constant pay, ready for the shew, tried and disciplined to an habit of counterfeiting blindness, the palsy, &c. of groaning and howling [d]; amongst others a lady of quality, *bonorata quondam femina*, who by a possession of some years standing was deaf, dumb and blind, gnashed with her teeth, and putting out a tongue like the trunk of an elephant, had more the appearance of a monster, than a woman; and no less than seven years a disciplining, they must say, for the purpose, *Cui bono?* To what end? To add the guilt of a most impious and senseless imposture to that of a counterfeit or real schism, the which they now renounced at the preaching and miracles of St. *Bernard*.

XXIX. Again, what must be said, consistently with these systems, of that wonderful action of the Saint, by which he expelled the schism out of all *Guienne*, and prevailed over the obstinacy of the duke? The whole province of the archiepiscopal Church of *Bordeaux* was oppressed by schismatics, from the *Pirenean* mountains to the river *Loire*, and nothing could resist the power of this prince, who had been gained over by

[c] D. Bernardi Vitæ, L. II. c. ii. iii.

[d] Free Inquiry, p. 95.

by immense sums of money, with which Gerard, the Antipope's adherent and legate, had corrupted him, (the fruits of rapine and extortion) and thereby rendered it his interest to maintain the schism. He had consented to a meeting of the Catholics and Schismatics at *Partigny*. All that could be gained of him then, was, that as for *Innocent* he might indeed be persuaded to submit to him, but for the Bishops whom he had expelled their sees, he never could, and
 ' *had sworn he never would, be reconciled with*
 ' *them.*' Mean while ' *the minister of God ha-*
 ' *ving recourse to more powerful arms, approaches*
 ' *the altar to pray and offer the Sacrifice. Those to*
 ' *whom it was permitted to assist at the divine myste-*
 ' *ries, had entered the church, and the duke re-*
 ' *mained without near the porch. The consecration*
 ' *ended and the peace given to the people, the ser-*
 ' *vant of God, no longer acting as man, put the*
 ' *body of our Lord on the patten, and carrying it*
 ' *with him, went forth with an inflamed counte-*
 ' *nance and eyes sparkling; not as supplicating but*
 ' *threatening; and addressed the duke in these awful*
 ' *and terrible words:*' *We have, said he, endea-*
 ' *voured to move you with our prayers, and you have*
 ' *despised us: many servants of God, in the assembly*
 ' *where you was present, have joined their intreaties*
 ' *with ours, and you have had no regard to them.*
 ' *But see here the Son of the Virgin, who is the Head*
 ' *and Lord of the Church, which you persecute, now*
 ' *come to you. Behold your Judge, at whose name*
 ' *every knee bows in heaven, on earth, and in hell.*
 ' *Behold the just Avenger of crimes, into whose hands*
 ' *this same soul which now animates you, will fall*
 ' *one day. Will you presume to regard the Master*

no more than you have done his servants. ' All
 ' who were present burst into tears, and pray-
 ' ing waited the event of this action, in expect-
 ' ation of seeing some extraordinary judgment
 ' from heaven. The duke seeing the Abbot
 ' come to him in the fervent spirit of zeal and
 ' holy transport, bearing in his hands the most
 ' sacred body of *Jesus Christ*, was struck with
 ' dread, and trembling every joint fell into a
 ' swoon, rolling himself on the ground like one
 ' out of his senses. Raised by his guards, he
 ' fell again on his face flat to the ground, neither
 ' looking at any one or uttering a word, but
 ' fetching deep sighs, and foaming at the mouth
 ' as in an epileptic fit. Then the servant of
 ' God approaching nearer, and touching him
 ' with his foot, commands him to rise and stand
 ' up, and hear his sentence pronounced from
 ' God : ' *Behold the Bishop of Poitiers*, says he,
whom you have driven from his church, go imme-
diately and be reconciled to him ; give him the holy
kiss of peace, as a pledge of a new union : lead him
yourself back into his church, and in atonement and
satisfaction to God, honour him as much as you have
injured him : and in the whole extent of your prin-
cipality recall all those back to the union of the
Church who have been divided from it by schism.
Submit yourself to Pope Innocent ; and as the whole
Church obeys him, do you also pay your obedience to
so great a Pontif, whom God has placed on St. Pe-
ter's chair. ' The duke hearing these words,
 ' and overcome by the authority of the divine
 ' spirit, and the presence of the blessed Sacra-
 ' ment. neither could nor dared to reply ; but
 ' instantly went to meet the Bishop, and re-
 ' ceived

‘ ceived him with the kifs of peace; and with
 ‘ the same hand he had driven him from his
 ‘ see, replaces him in it to the joy of the whole
 ‘ city.’ Thus was the schism quite extin-
 guished, and peace restored to the whole Church
 of *Guienne*, God’s spirit manifestly accomplish-
 ing it by the ministry of his servant. Well for
 the duke he did not resist! swift vengeance at
 that time overtook the most guilty; the Dean
 of the church of *Poitiers*, who broke down the
 altar on which *St. Bernard* had said mass, as if
 polluted by a schismatic; the archpriest, who
 published a schismatical synod to be held there;
Gerard the bishop of *Angoulesme*, the duke’s evil
 counsellor, and chief author of the schism, all
 came to a disastrous end, and died impeni-
 tent.

XXX. When he undertook to suppress here-
 sy in *Languedoc*, he addressed his prayer to God,
 as he owned himself: *What shall we do, O Lord
 my God! This generation seeketh after a sign, and
 little shall we profit them by our words, unless thou
 confirmest them by the miraculous effects of thy
 power.* His prayer was heard. For besides
 many wonderful signs, by which God confirm-
 ed his servant’s preaching at *Tbolouse* and other
 parts infected; ‘ at a place called *Sarlat*, the
 ‘ sermon ended, and loaves brought him to
 ‘ bless, as he was wont every where to do;
 ‘ raising his hand and blessing them with the
 ‘ sign of the cross in the name of God, he says:’
*Ye shall know that we preach the truth to you, and
 that the heretics delude you by a false doctrine, if
 your sick recover their health by eating of this bread,
 which I have blessed.* ‘ This proposition startled
 ‘ the

the venerable Bishop of Chartres, the great Godfrey, present and near to the holy abbot, who added: They shall be healed if they eat it with a firm faith. To which the Saint replied with a perfect confidence in God: *That is not what I say; what I say is, that all those who shall eat of it shall be cured of their diseases, to the end they may know by this miracle, that we speak the truth, and that we announce to them the word of God, conformably to his divine verity.* Such numbers of sick were cured by eating of this bread, that the fame of this so marvelous an effect was spread throughout the whole province, and the servant of God, on his return to the neighbouring parts, was obliged to avoid the insupportable concourse of people, by declining out of the way he came. The ravage of these heretics and their errors are thus described by the Saint himself in his letter to the count of Tholouse [e]: *On every side were found churches without people, people without priests, priests without the respect which is due to their character; in short, Christians without Jesus Christ. The entrance to life was refused to little children of the faithful by refusing them the grace of holy baptism. They scoffed at prayers and sacrifices for the dead, at the invocation of Saints, at the Bishops excommunications, at pilgrimages of devotion, at building of churches, at ceasing from work on festival days, at the blessing of chrism and holy oils; finally they despised in general all the ceremonies and all the rites of the Church.* Such were these heretics, whom a favourite author of Protestants,

Du

[e] Epist. CCXL. v. Serm. 65. in Cant.

Du Pin, says, *St. Bernard confounded, both by his sermons and numerous miracles* [f].

XXXI. The glory of his miracles was not less conspicuous in public calamities. The people of *Metz* were engaged in a cruel war with their neighbouring princes. More than two thousand had already lost their lives, and such was the animosity and thirst of revenge on both sides, that the whole province was threatened with inevitable desolation. Their venerable Metropolitan *Illin* Archbishop of *Treves*, had recourse to *St. Bernard* in his extreme affliction. Coming therefore to *Clairvaux*, and casting himself at the Saint's feet and of all his Religious, with a profound humility, beseeches, conjures him to obviate such great evils, which no man but himself could remedy. He had been long confined under a grievous infirmity, *sick even to death*, as he writes to the Bishop of *Ostia* [g], but God had abated his sickness a few days before, and bodily strength never failed him when an affair of importance called for his assistance. The help which he received from heaven in this last action of his life, was so visible, that labour seemed his recruit of strength. He arrives when both armies were encamped on each side of the *Moselle*. In short, notwithstanding all the Saint's endeavours, so great was their obstinacy and animosity, that peace seemed desperate. the princes refusing even to see the Saint, lest he should prevail upon them to change their minds. The assembly even began

[f] Ch. VIII. Cen. XII.

[g] Epist. CIX.

' began to separate with great confusion. He
 ' comforts his religious, and foretells a happy
 ' issue. Immediately after midnight a deputa-
 ' tion comes from the princes, desiring a treaty.
 ' During which, great difficulties being raised,
 ' all those who were afflicted with diverse mala-
 ' dies received health of body, and those who
 ' beheld the miracles, were edified and con-
 ' firmed in faith.' So many miracles were wrought
 in open day, under the eyes of such multitudes,
 and the cures were so sudden, by means of a
 short prayer, by a touch, of such inveterate
 distempers, of blindness, palsy of eight years
 standing, &c. so perfect and durable; that it
 can be no wonder when the princes came be-
 fore him, and were intreated by him, as he had
 done from the beginning, to conclude the peace,
 they answered with sighs, *It is fitting we should
 give a favourable ear to him, whom we see God
 loves and bears; that we should do much at his in-
 treaty, at whose prayer God works so great miracles
 in our presence.* The Saint always rejecting such
 subjects of vain glory, replies, *It is not on my
 account that God does these wonders, but on yours.*
 A miracle of the same nature wrought the same
 day at Metz on this occasion, determined the
 people of that city to consent to terms of peace;
 peace was concluded; and the Saint returning
 to Clairvaux, soon finished a life beneficial to all
 degrees of men, by a death precious in the sight
 of God [b].

XXXII. To this glaring notoriety I shall add
 only, that if any imposture could possibly have
 inter-

[b] August. 20. M. C. LIII.

intervened, men of the greatest dignity and power, influenced by the strongest motives to detect and expose it, the best-qualified for the purpose, then living, and appealed to for the truth of the facts delivered by the Saint's biographers, must have detected it. *e. g.* The dutchess of *Lorain* is attested to have lived a life not answerable to the nobility of her birth; she was reclaimed by *St. Bernard* to a course of Christian virtue, and glories to this day that she is the person, from whom he cast out seven devils [i]. *Mary Magdalen*, says *Dr. Middleton*, from whom seven devils were cast out, continued ever after in her sober senses, accompanying and ministering to our Lord, to the time of his death [k]. Thence he concludes the truth of her dispossession. 'Conrad king of the Romans, afterwards emperor, was present at *Frankfort*, when all the sick of the province were brought to the Saint, and such numbers of miraculous cures were wrought before his eyes, with so prodigious a concourse of people on that account; that one day *Conrad*, unable by other means to prevent his being crushed to death by the crowd, put off his royal mantle, and taking the Saint in his arms, carried him out of the church [l].' *Lewis VI*, king of *France*, ejected certain Bishops of his kingdom out of their sees and episcopal cities [m]. The Saint desirous
of

[i] Usque hodie se esse de qua septem dæmonia eiec-
cerit, gloriatur. Lib. I.

[k] Free Inquiry, p. 94.

[l] Lib. III.

[m] lb. See the edition of *Horstius*.

of a reconciliation writes many letters to the king, still extant among his works. Many of these Bishops, in the Saint's presence, endeavouring all they could to appease the king's wrath, prostrate themselves with great humility at his feet, he still unrelenting. Next day the Saint, moved with a holy indignation, very severely reproves the king for his despising of God's ministers, and declaring to him the revelation he had the night past, adds, *This obstinacy will be punished by the death of king Philip your eldest son. For I have seen you with prince Lewis your younger, prostrate at the feet of the Bishops, whom you yesterday despised: whence I knew that death snatching Philip from you, you would implore the assistance of the Church, which you now oppress, to obtain by her prayers that Lewis may reign in his stead.* But a little time elapsed before a fatal accident shewed the effect of this prediction [n].

The queen of France, *Eleonore*, daughter of the duke of *Guienne*, and wife of *Lewis the younger*, had lived with him many years childless. The holy abbot being with the king on occasion of some difference, which he sought to pacify, and the queen opposing him in it, as he exhorted her to desist, and give better counsel to the king she began in the sequel of the discourse to lament her sterility, and humbly

[n] The young prince was killed by a fall from his horse in the streets of *Paris*, the horse taking fright, says *Suger*, abbot of *St. Denis*, the author of the life of *Lewis the Gros*, *obvio porco diabolico offensus equus*, an. 1131.

‘ humbly intreated his prayers, that God would
 ‘ grant her a child. If you do what I advise,
 ‘ replies the Saint, I will obtain of God what
 ‘ you request. She promised him, and the
 ‘ difference was soon determined. The king
 ‘ having learnt from the queen what had passed,
 ‘ humbly besought the man of God to fulfil his
 ‘ promise also. The effect was so speedy, that
 ‘ the queen lay in about that time twelve-
 ‘ month [o]. *Thibauld*, count of *Champagne*,
 ‘ a great and pious prince, beloved of *St. Ber-*
 ‘ *nard*, next to the king in power, had been
 ‘ grievously afflicted by the war which this
 ‘ same *Lewis* waged against him many years.
 ‘ *Godfrey*, Bishop of *Langres*, often consulted
 ‘ *St. Bernard*, to know what God had revealed
 ‘ to him, at what time the count’s afflictions
 ‘ would have an end; and was as often answer-
 ‘ ed by the Saint, that he saw no end of them.
 ‘ One day, the same question being asked by
 ‘ the same Prelate, the Saint answered, that
 ‘ peace would be made in five months time;
 ‘ which happened as it was foretold. For the
 ‘ last day of the fifth month following the peace
 ‘ was concluded by the Saint’s prediction and
 ‘ prayers [p]’ But I have exceeded my bounds,
 and shall only add,

XXXIII. That besides these living witnesses
 of so great dignity, so greatly concerned in the
 truth or falshood of these miracles, there is not
 one *motive* that can influence posterity, and the
 authors of our systems, to impugn the truth of
 them,

[o] Lib. III. from the edition of Horstius.
 [p] Lib. III.

them, but subsisted then, and from prejudices (the greatest that man can be biassed by) founded on temporal *interest*, *schism*, *heresy*; and this among men, who had all the learning, opportunity, as cotemporary, and present on the spot, besides all the means of power, ecclesiastical and secular, requisite to discover, and to expose hypocrisy and imposture, if such there had been. Such were *Abaelard*, *Gillebert of Porree*, Bishop of *Poitiers*, *Peter of Pisa*, the Antipope's legate to the king of *Sicily*, sent for by him as the most eloquent, the greatest canonist of his time, on purpose to entrap and confound *St. Bernard*; and such were all those kings and princes, and all their Prelates, who at first sided with a politic flagitious *Antipope*, whose *all* was at stake. The number of enemies and powerful adversaries, who would readily have embraced all occasions to asperse the Saint, and to discredit his miracles, gives an additional lustre to his sanctity. God was pleased to bless in a wonderful manner the extraordinary labours of this unwearyed apostolical man, whom he chose for the happy instrument to defeat a dangerous schism, and to restore peace to the Church. And the king of *Sicily*, who held out the longest in refusing due obedience to the chief Pastor of the Church, and had been a witness to the miracles wrought by *St. Bernard* at *Salerno*, though irritated by the Saint's prophecy made to him in person, and the overthrow of his army, which was ascribed to his prayers, sent, after the schism was at an end, to him for the religious of his order, and settled them in his dominions. Heresy despairing at last of blackening his character, has

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challenged a *Bernard* as one of her professors [q]. The *primitive Fathers* of the *Reformation*, whom the modern systems should revere, whilst they despise all or most others, cannot forbear giving him encomiums as inconsistent with hypocrisy or imposture, as the endeavours of their modern followers to prove either are destitute of all appearance of truth.

XXXIV. Let us now come nearer to our own times, though in regard to nations far remote; and see whether the *new light* of the *Reformation* is as good at discovering objects distant in place, as in time.

The author of the *two previous Questions* to *Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry*, owns [r], that what is related of the history of *Xavier*, of the miraculous cures wrought on the deaf, the dumb and lame, the dead raised to life, either by the sign of the cross [s], or by sprinkling with holy water, is related with so many circumstances [t], as to time, place, person, manner; and from witnesses [u], who were present at the performance of several of these miraculous operations; and vouched by men of such eminence, upon an exact and minute search, that if strong attestation were sufficient to gain credit to such facts, it would be hard to deny it to what they relate.

XXXV. Yet all these miracles, with the authority attesting them, are dispatched at once with these few words: *None but a professed Papist believe*

[q] See Art. XV. of this Chapter.

[r] Page 8.

[s] Page 10.

[t] Page 8.

[u] Page 10.

lieve a tittle of these stories [x]. And this argument is of such efficacy with him, that he has frequent recourse to it. All Protestants consequently treat these miracles as impostures.

But could not the unbelieving *Jews* or *Heathens* have said as much against the miracles of *Christ* and the *Apostles*? *None but professed Christians believe a tittle of these stories. All Jews, all Heathens constantly treat these miracles as impostures. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him, John vii. 48.* Men that have adopted a certain system, whether *Protestant, Pagan, or Jewish*, may argue thus, consistently enough *ad hominem*, from the consent of all those who are of such a system; that they cannot admit of any miracles destructive of their own system, unless they renounce it. But in general, what historical or moral truth could subsist, what miracles, what arguments could prevail, if the disbelief of men bound by system, Infidel, Sceptic, or Heterodox, to deny these truths, miracles, and their proofs, may be pleaded in opposition to them?

XXXVI. But to make the disbelief of this Saint's miracles the easier, his reader is to reflect that he was a *Jesuit* [y], and that *Jesuits* have always been great miracle-mongers, and are charged with labouring under a most deplorable want of honesty; and their morality so bad, and their coisiftry so loose, that no one ought to depend much on what they affirm or deny, if their interest, or that of their society, be any ways concerned.

XXXVII.

[x] Previous Questions, p. 29, 25.

[y] Page 18, 19.

XXXVII. This character, if the author can prove it true, will certainly ground this consequence, that miraculous accounts, resting on such authority *alone*, are not to be credited. But from what *morality* has this gentleman learnt, that a body of men, a learned body too, to say no more of them, charged by their declared enemies, and mostly their enemies, because enemies to the Church; charged, I say, of bad morality, and this charge fully refuted, and even burnt by the common hangman, in public justice to their injured reputation; are *ipso facto*, for being thus charged, to be condemned? equally to be condemned, as lately, for *forming a cabal against the Fathers*; notwithstanding the flagrant execution also, of that [z] charge by the hand of *ministerial* justice, even that of Dr. Middleton, on whose sleeve this same author has pinned his systematic, I do not say, Christian faith.

When this author has once proved, which he will never attempt to prove, that this *society* of men hold a different system of morality or casuistry, from the other learned bodies and *universities* of the same Catholic communion; even that any single approved author of this whole *society*, whose works make no small figure in the best libraries in *Europe*; when, I say, he shall have proved that one such author has asserted, that it is lawful to lie for interest,

[z] See the refutation of it by the Doctor in a Postscript to the Introduct. Discourse, in answer to an archidiaconal charge of a *Jesuit-cabal*, which Dr. Chapman pretended to have discovered.

interest, even for the greatest; or, that does not own that forging of miracles is highly criminal; it will be time then to think how to apologize for these Fathers: till then, he is called upon to answer for his own *loose morality*, and *unchristian casuistry*.

XXXVIII. But this is not so much to point out the looseness of his *morality*, as the weakness of his argument. For the truth of *Xavier's* miracles does not *only* rest on the authority of *Jesuits*, nor even *Catholics*. *Baldeus* was no Catholic, *Hacluit* no Catholic, *Tavernier* no Catholic. But these Protestants, it may be said, depose nothing as to his miracles: nor indeed could such an explicit confession of their own error, and of the truth of Catholic faith, be expected from them. But [a] ‘a man so gifted of God for the
 ‘ function of a minister and ambassador of Jesus
 ‘ Christ; another Saint Paul, had he been a Pro-
 ‘ testant; a worthy preacher of the gospel, and a
 ‘ divine teacher of the Indians: who after labours,
 ‘ injuries and crosses infinite, undergone with great
 ‘ patience and joy, and having first made known
 ‘ Jesus Christ to many thousand of these Eastern
 ‘ people, dies accumulated with all sorts of spiritual
 ‘ blessings . . . who had established the Christian faith
 ‘ with an admirable progress in all places through
 ‘ which he passed, by his zeal, his example, his bo-
 ‘ linefs of life, (here a traveller speaks, who had
 ‘ been upon the spot) even in the isle of Nippon
 ‘ in the neighbourhood of China; who by a just title
 ‘ may be called (though a Papist and Jesuit) the
 ‘ Saint

[a] See the Saint's life englished by Dryden, L. vi. p. 766, & seqq.

‘*Saint Paul and true Apostle of the Indies,*’ was himself alone an instance of a more miraculous interposition of the divine power in his behalf, in compassing such *supernatural* ends without external miracles, than with them.

XXXIX. Say then from Protestant testimony, even of these adverse systems, that God worked miracles by this Saint, since Mr. *Toll*, Dr. *Church*, acknowledge, and reason evinces, that the conversion of heathen nations could not have been effected without miracles. Nay, that it is [b] demonstrable, that without miracles, Christianity could never have been propagated, and that if miracles were not worked in favour of it, at first at least, its propagation was itself miraculous; that though he applied himself to study the rudiments of the *Japonian* language; yet God frequently, and as occasion required, rewarded the ardent love and zeal of his servant, either with the miraculous gift of tongues, or with as miraculous a facility of learning a hundred different ones: And for the very same reason which they alledge in favour of the Apostles, viz. it being as impossible for this *second Paul*, as for the first, or any of the Apostles [c], so soon, so extensively, so effectually, to have preached the gospel without it. And farther shew the same from the testimony of *Mahometans* and *heathen* nations. For as the conversion of *Gentiles* to the *Christian* faith is the testimony of *Gentiles* to the truth of Christianity, and of its miraculous propagation; so the permanent effects of this Saint’s presenting
the

[b] Dr. Church’s Vindication, p. 70.

[c] Dr. Church *ibid*.

the holy and living waters, as Baldeus speaks, to the great and small of these Eastern Infidels; the number of Christians still subsisting in many of those parts, and to this day ascribing their conversion to the miracles and sanctity of the great Father, is a testimony of Infidels to the miraculous success of these apostolical labours, and to the miracles, by which God co-operating confirmed his preaching. And in effect, so great a testimony from living witnesses attesting the truth of what they deposed under the most solemn oaths, leaves no room to wonder, that after a juridical process, the Pope says in the Bull of his Canonization, That the new Apostle of the Indies has spiritually received the blessings, which God vouchsafed to the Patriarch Abraham, that he was the father of many nations; and that he saw his children in Jesus Christ multiplied beyond the stars of heaven, and the sands of the sea. Besides that his apostleship had the signs of a divine vocation, the gift of tongues, prophecy, and miracles, with the evangelical virtues in all perfection [d].

XL. As for the miracles in particular, *they were not*, says one of his learned biographers [e], *miracles wrought in private, and which we are to believe on the testimony of two or three interested persons: they were ordinarily public matters of fact, avowed by a whole city or kingdom, and which had for witnesses the body of a nation, for the most part HEATHEN or MAHOMETAN. . . many of which miracles have been of long continuance. And it was*

[d] Vide Bull. Canoniz.

[e] F. D. Bouhours in his Advertisement, translated by Mr. Dryden.

easy for such who were incredulous, to satisfy their doubts concerning them. And all of them have been attended by such consequences as have confirmed their truth beyond dispute: such as were the conversions of kingdoms, and of kings, who were the greatest enemies to Christianity; the wonderful ardency of those new Christians; and the heroic constancy of their martyrs.—Even the mission of the Saint, this author continues, gives them an authority in our first conceptions of them. For being sent from God for the conversion of Infidels, it was necessary that the faith should be planted in the East by the same means as it had been through all the world in the beginning of the Church—Conformable to which conceptions, that learned and judicious critic GROTIUS, deservedly so stiled by all these systematists, [f] knew no reason why some should confine the miraculous gift . . . to the first times of the gospel. And farther, did not doubt but that the same promise would be fulfilled, even now, to any one who should preach Christ, in a manner agreeable to his will, to the Heathens, who are ignorant of him. Adding then to the Protestant testimony that of Grotius, we will proceed with the evidence given by Heathens. But with due caution to the Protestant reader from the Protestant Dr. S-k-s [g], not to fall into the wrong way of arguing of Bishop Atterbury [b]; who from the distance of place concludes, that, as in China and Japan wonder-workers may pretend to have done as many miracles

[f] Vide not. in Marc. xvi. 17. and Dr. Church's Vindic. p. 68.

[g] Previous Questions, p. 12, 13.

[b] Vol. Sermon. I. p. 18, 19.

miracles as they please, without the fear of a discovery: so all was but pious fraud.—Not so, says Dr. S-k-s, it is not just to argue thus. For if real miracles be done any where, at Jerusalem or Smyrna, in Africa or in Egypt, this way of raising a difficulty or objection, will equally lie against them all; since no man is obliged to go from home in order to discover a fraud, or to be convinced of a truth. We need not therefore travel to Japan, to know that the king of Bungo, whose prosperity, while a Heathen, had passed into a proverb, having conquered four or five kingdoms; but, converted to Christianity by that father of his soul, (so he used to call Father Xavier all his life time) and, two months after his baptism, was dispoiled of all his estates by his rebel subjects confederated against him in hatred to Christianity; yet endured his misfortune with the most heroical Christian constancy, and made a vow at the foot of the altar, to live and die a Christian, and, in a pious transport of zeal, added, that if all Europe and Japan, the Fathers of the Society, even the Pope himself, should renounce Christ, yet that for his own particular he would confess him with his last breath [i]. But at length he was reinstalled by his valour and conduct, in his kingdom, and sent a solemn embassy to Gregory the XIIIth.

XLI. We need but attend Mancio his ambassador to Rome, with those of the king of Arima and the prince of Omura: where in the name of their sovereigns they intreated the canonization of

[i] Page 753 of the Saint's life englished by Dryden.

of the Apostle of their country, as the greatest favour.

Not *Rome* only, nor all *Europe*, was witness to this embassy, which gave an authentic account of the sincere conversion of those nations, but *Goa* and *Asia* saw the great respect which the *Mahometans* had for the Saint. When the ambassador from the *Mogul* was sent for missionaries, who might explain the mysteries of *Christianity* to the Emperor his master, and asked to see the miraculous incorrupt body of the Saint, *he durst not approach it*, says *Boubours* [k], the writer of his life, (and this capital of the *Portuguese Indian* conquests was witness of the fact) *till first himself and all his train had taken off their shoes; after which ceremony, all of them having many times bowed themselves to the ground, they venerated the Saint with as much devotion, as if they had not been Mahometans.*

XLII. Not only this capital, but all that resorted to it from all parts of the world, *Mahometans* and *Gentiles*, were witness of that great and continued miracle, the body of the Saint entire and uncorrupt after so long a burial in quick lime; the flesh tender and of a lively colour, the features the same as when alive; nay, even his sacerdotal vestments, in which he was buried, remained without any damage from the lime. He was twice buried in quick lime, and for many months. And when the body was long after examined [l] by *Ambrosio Ribera*, the Vicar-General of *Goa*, (no *Jesuit*) his inwards
were

[k] The Saint's life englished by Dryden, p. 755.

[l] Ibid. p. 763.

were found corresponding to the outward appearance; and blood issued from it plentifully wheresoever wounded; of as pure a colour as from a living body. A miracle continued to this day, witness *d'Almeida*, Marquis of *Castell-novo*, Viceroy of the *Indies*, and the Archbishop of *Goa*, so lately as in 1744. For then they both arrived there from *Lisbon*, with express orders from the king of *Portugal*, (I take this from the account of the fact published to all *Europe* [m]) earnestly desiring they might be permitted in the king's name, to kiss the feet of the holy Apostle of the *Indies*. This request (continues my author) was of such a nature as not to be refused; so that after a due preparation, the shrine was opened, when with inexpressible satisfaction and joy they beheld the body *perfectly intire without the least scent, and environed with an extraordinary splendor*. The Saint's head has still its hair on. They examined his face, hand (his right arm had been long before cut off and sent to *Rome*) breast and feet, and could find no alteration in them. After considering these things with due respect and veneration, they placed the body in a more decent shrine, and more worthy of this rich treasure. The Viceroy, and after him the Archbishop dressed in his pontifical habit, approached the Saint. The Archbishop took off his mitre, and placed it at the Saint's feet, and both of them continued in prayer on their knees for the space of half an hour,

[m] See Dedicatory Epistle in the 27th Vol. of the *Recueil* published by *Du Halde* and others.

hour, shedding abundance of those tears which overflow in true devotion. After which they kissed his sacred feet, naming particularly each of the Royal family in whose name they performed the ceremony, often repeating that of his Majesty, and of our holy Father the Pope. This ceremony over, the Archbishop said Mass on the Altar opposite to the shrine. The Viceroy assisted with great devotion, and the sight of the body had inspired him with so great a confidence that, as he said himself, he did not in the least doubt, that, under so powerful a protection, the crown of *Portugal* would soon triumph over the Infidel powers which surrounded it. Happy presage of what in two years was fully compleated. The year following, the Viceroy having raised forces to avenge the crown of *Portugal* of the insults of *Buonsolo*, a neighbouring prince of *Goa*, a haughty, violent, ambitious man; took the field, and attacked this dangerous enemy both by sea and land; possessed himself of his best towns and strongest forts, defeated his troops though numerous, and every where victorious returned to *Goa*, rendering thanks to the Saint, whose protection he had earnestly sought before he set out. A second campaign finished the intire conquest of these Infidels. Their strongest fortresses, magazines, fleets and arsenals fell into the hands of the brave and prudent *Almeida* visibly protected by the great Apostle. The news of this success no sooner reached the court of *Portugal*; than the king, in testimony of his gratitude to the Saint to whom, under God, he ascribed the great success of his arms, besought the

* Pope to declare this great Apostle the chief
 * Protector of the East Indies, from the Cape of
 * *Good Hope* to *Japan*, taking in all the Islands,
 * Countries and Provinces in that vast extent,
 * which the *Pope*, touched with the pious senti-
 * ments that moved the King to request it, grant-
 * ed by a *Brief* dated *Feb. 24, 1747*.

XI.III But our *Adepts* in *Physick*, who can so learn-
 edly reduce [*n*] *energumenuous* disorders to epilep-
 sy or madness, (and why not those of the Gospel?)
 may perhaps account for this incorruption also,
 from some natural causes hitherto undiscovered.
 And a full conviction of such *natural powers*
 would be, their exhibiting a body so preserved,
 among the curiosities of a *Gresham College*, or
 other such repositories. Till then, we shall
 take this for a miracle.

XLIV. There remains another testimony, that
 of the Catholick Church, and of all her children
 in all parts of the Universe. For to mention all
 the testimonies, even of the enemies of *Jesus*
Christ, in behalf of the sanctity and miracles of
 this his servant, his being called by them [*o*] *the*
man of prodigies, the friend of heaven, the master
of nature, the God of the world; their long voyages
 to *Goa* to behold his body; a *Mosque* erected to
 him by a sect of *Mabometans* on the western coast
 of *Comorine*; and the *Mabometan* king of *Tra-*
vancor's building a magnificent temple to him;
 is as unnecessary as it is beyond my compass.

XLV. Even before his canonization, and the
 juridical informations finished, the publick de-
 votion of the people in those parts, could not be
 with

[*n*] See Dr. Mead's *Medica sacra*.

[*o*] *Ib.* p. 672.

withheld. And the Archbishop of Goa himself, *Don Christopher de Lisbonne* [p] wore on his breast a little image of the Saint, and his devotion was rewarded with a miraculous cure of the stone, of which he never after felt any pain.

XLVI. The informations concerning the acts, sanctity and miracles of the Saint, were made by the order of *John III* king of *Portugal* [q] sent to the *Viceroy* of the Indies *Don Francis Barreto*, in a verbal process [r] executed at *Goa*, at *Cocbin*, at the coast of *Fishery*, at *Malaca*, the *Moluccas*, and in other parts. The *Archbishop* of *Goa* and all the *Bishops* of *India* seconded the designs of the king of *Portugal*, by acting on their side with the Pope for the canonization of *Xavier*.

XLVII. *Lucena* informs us in his *Portuguese history* of the Saint, that he had in his hands the authentic copies of the said informations, and the originals of many letters written from the *Indies* on that subject, which to this day are deposited in the archives of the university of *Coimbra*. The archives also of the *Casa Professa* at *Rome*, and the authentic acts of the Saint's canonization contain what *Bartoli*, the celebrated *Italian* writer, relates of the Saints history; which archives and acts as well as those of other Saints canonized, are accessible, and may be, and have been, examined (what ever Mr. *Dodwell* may surmise to the contrary) by the learned and inquisitive of any Nation or Religion.

XLVIII.

[p] Pag. 670.

[q] Ibid. page 751.

[r] Page 610.

XLVIII. After a juridicial examen [s], *Paul V* performed what his predecessor had designed, by an express bull, *October* the 25th, 1619, declaring him beatified: and his successor *Gregory XV* canoniz'd him in all forms; but death preventing him, his successor *Urban VIII* made the bull of his canonization, which reports (says *Boubours*) almost all the miracles that are read in his life, and which the reader is referr'd to. The rest, omitted in the *Bull*, are contained in the acts and process of his Canonization.

XLIX. Yet these miracles so well attested, do not surpass his miraculous virtues, which are as well attested, nor the miracle of his life supported ten years amidst excessive labours, abstinence and austerities. Nor do the miracles, published in his life and the acts of his canonization, equal in number those, which God has worked, in different parts of the world, by the Saint's intercession since his death. The Marquis of *Pianesse* [t], a great genius, a great scholar, a general and states-man as great, as any of that age, allied to the illustrious House of *Savoy*, which he served all his life in both those capacities, this noble author, in his excellent treatise of the truth of Christian Religion, alledges the famous miracle performed at *Naples* by the Saint. Thus he speaks of it [u], *The first miracle I shall mention, of those which have been wrought in my time, is that which all Naples admired, in the person of father Marcellus Mastrilli a Jesuit; who being*
at

[s] Page 763.

[t] See the Preliminary discourse of the French Translation.

[u] Page 253. Paris Edit. 1672.

at the point of death from a wound in his head, was in a moment cured of it by St. FRANCIS XAVIER, and his intire strength instantly restored to him, in order to go and preach the Gospel in Japan, and then seal the truth of it with his blood; an infinite number of persons were witnesses of this miracle in so great and populous a city, and where Fr. Mastrilli was so well known, on account of his illustrious birth. Numbers even had visited him in his illness, and saw him in the sad condition to which his wound had reduced him in a few days. All Italy, a part of Spain and Portugal, the East Indies have seen the effects of so strange a prodigy, in the journey, and in the death of that holy man.

L. And yet after all, we must believe that these facts, notwithstanding the Sanction of this Heathen, Mabometan, Protestant, and Catholic testimony, ow all their credit to the loose casuistry, and abominable immorality of a few abandon'd wretches, whose interest was concern'd in the cheat; all which Society was then, and now is, but an inconsiderable part in comparison of the whole body of the Church of Christ.

If we must believe, that Kings and Princes, Gentils, Mabometans and Christians, Bishops, Archbishops and Popes, Viceroyes and Magistrates, Asia and Europe, were but the dupes of this imposture; the ring-leaders, I should have said, and chief accomplices in it; who together with the shoals of witnesses, deposing under oath the truth of these facts, chose to die perjured, neither recalling, nor repenting of such, not only not pious, but bellish fraud, and damn their souls for the credit and interest of such a Society as no rational

Heathen would have enter'd into : we must believe the possibility of such a *Jesuit Cabal* as the devil himself, if he could match it in theory, could never execute in practice. For *Satan cannot be divided against himself* : he cannot compass the real conversion of *Heathen* nations by Satanic arts and Empirics. He cannot accomplish *Christ's* promises to his Church, and impower *his* missionaries to confirm their preaching by such *signs* as were to follow that of his Apostles, and of those the Apostles were impower'd to send. He cannot prevail on the universal Church of *Christ* to give her testimony to his diabolical forgeries : for the *gates of hell shall not prevail against her*. Much less shall the puny efforts of schemes invented by man prevail ; and men, who pin their *implicit* faith on such monstrously absurd hypotheses, men able to digest such *prodigies, mysteries* of iniquity, and such *impossibilities*, should for shame cease charging credulity on their adversaries, or *Christ's* universal Church, for their belief of any mystery, and give over writing against any miracle whatever.

If the interest and credit of *Protestancy* is concerned, nay depends on the *captivating mens understandings* under the belief of prodigies so incomprehensible, how weakly are they both supported by such a prop as derives its whole strength from imagination only, and one so absurd and inconsistent as to suppose (for it is no more than supposition) that a single little body could so prevail on the vast extensive body of the *Church*, as to make her, for that *Society's* interest against her own, the dupe of imposture ? a *Church*, whose interest and credit gloriously subsisted, before these miracles and this *Society* had a being, and without
which

which it would ever gloriously subsist. An imposture quite extraordinary indeed, having every mark of real truth that truth can have, and not one single mark, which real imposture necessarily and unavoidably abounds with. No, the *cui bono*, the interest lies wholly on the *Protestant* side, producing at the same time and combining together, excessive incredulity of facts the *best attested*, and excessive credulity of *impossibilities*.

LI. But we must not think, that the glory of imposing on the senses of mankind, and making them their accomplices in their *Cabals*, is in the first instance to be ascribed to cunning *Jesuits*. It has extended it self, we are told thro' all ages of the *Church*, and *Protestant credulity* has introduced it into the *Society* of the *Apostolic* fathers; who had certainly a concern for the *interest* and *credit* of their body. And this *Protestant* credulity being of a spreading and contagious nature, it has so infected the *Collins's* and *Tindals*, &c. that they have made imposture co-eval with the *Apostles*, who were certainly no less concerned for the credit of their *Lord* and master, and the *interest* of the *apostolic* colledge, and the *Society* of Christians, than their successors can be.

LII. I cannot dismiss this subject of the miracles and miraculous success of this great Saint and modern Apostle without observing on the other side, how unsuccessfull the *unmiraculous* Protestants are in their missions. They talk indeed about propagating the Gospel in foreign parts and are at great expences in rigging out, and supporting missionaries. But the world is well persuaded, that their whole harvest among *Heathen* nations might be literally stored in one good barn, (and

that not over crowded), which for two hundred years and upwards, has been gathered by these Evangelical Husband men, and all their *Propaganda's*. It is now as in the days of *Tertullian*; reformers talents lie in *perverting* Christians, not in *converting* Heathens.

LIII. But the public has been informed [x] that 69328 Infidels converted to Christianity in China by Romish missionaries, *is so small a number for so vast and populous an Empire, as plainly proves that the word of God is not very powerful from the mouth of those modern Apostles*. What must be then expected from a Church which, to believe her testimony, tho' she owns it not infallible, is so much more *primitive*, more *pure*, abounding with a better grounded zeal; which we have heard [y], *has not its equal*? Surely, no less than her *ten thousands* to every *thousand*. Nevertheless, says my author whom I have before referred to [z]. 'What Infidel nations or kings have ever been brought over to the faith of *Christ* by Protestants, or other sectaries, so as to entitle any of them to a share in those ancient prophecies, which were to be verified in and by the true Church? We have never heard of any such conversions; though it must be granted, that no nation has better opportunities than the *English* for carrying on a work of this nature, by reason of their plantations and factories in all parts of the Heathen world.' Can we say, adds Mr. *Morden* [a], *we have improved the*

[x] London Evening Post. n. 4242.

[y] See address of the convocation, Dec. 1754.

[z] Grounds of the old Religion, p. 105.

[a] Geography rectified, p. 596.

the advantage which God hath put into our hands, to his glory and the propagation of his Gospel? Have we made so much as one solemn mission of pious and learned men to preach the glad tidings of salvation in Jesus Christ so much as to those ignorant Heathens that confine upon the English pale, or the poor Negroes that are detained in cruel slavery in our own plantations?

LIV. Dr. Heylin [b], after having told his readers that the people of new England are, for the most part, well enough disposed, and tractable and docile in matters of Religion, adds, *which notwithstanding, I find not any great encrease of Christianity among the natives: our English undertakers thinking it sufficient, if they and their houses served the Lord, without caring what became of the souls of the wretched people, which hitherto have sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, notwithstanding those new lights which have shined amongst them.*

LV. We are told, my author [c], adds, by some modern writers, of the endeavours of one Mr. Elliot, a dissenting minister, to bring over the Indians of new England to the Christian Religion: and we know that a Society has been established at London for propagating the Gospel, by means of which some Churches have been built in our American plantations; and, if we believe their own account, some kind of a reformation effected among the English there. But as for the conversion of Infidels, as far as I can find by their freshest memoirs, it has scarce been attempted by their missionaries, much

[b] Cosmography, 2d Edit. p. 1027.

[c] Grounds, &c. pag. 66.

‘ much less effected ; so that I fear after all we
 ‘ may truly say what the *Atlas Geographus* says
 ‘ of *Virginia* [d], that to the scandal of our nation,
 ‘ the English have taught the inhabitants little
 ‘ besides the vices of drunkenness, fraud &c.’ No,
 not even *methodist* zeal, in all its excursions from
North to West, has aimed at any other conver-
 sions, for ought I can find, than from reformed
Quakerist, *Anabaptist*, *Brownist*, *Conformist*, *non-*
Conformist *Protestancy* of British subjects, to
methodist *Protestancy* still more reformed. With
 respect to this was [e] the promising prospect of suc-
 cess which their Apostle declared in his oratory he
 had been lately blessed with in the American re-
 gions; and these conversions may be looked upon as
 the little cloud which increased to so surprising a
 magnitude ! So that if the Christian Religion is
 to become universal before the dissolution of this
 globe of the earth, as a learned Prelate [f] con-
 cludes from the *Revelation* [g] ; it must be com-
 passed by other preaching than that of his own
 Clergy ; who, it is visible [h], are not of the seed
 of those men by whom salvation came to Israel.

LVI. Compare what they have done in this
 length of time, with the harvest gather’d by this
 single missionary of the Catholic Church, in ten
 years

[d] Page 712.

[e] From the News-Paper, May 15, 1755. men-
 tioning Mr. *Whitfield*’s Sermon in his oratory on Sa-
 turday night.

[f] Bishop of Norwich’s Sermon before the last
 anniversary meeting of the Society for propagating the
 Gospel.

[g] Rev. xiv.

[h] I. Machab. v. 26.

years only [i]. In the kingdom of *Travancor*, all that coast was converted in a short space of time, and forty five Churches immediately built. In one month, the Saint writes himself, that he baptized with his own hands ten thousand Idolaters; and frequently, in one day, a well peopled village.

At *Amanguchi* in *Japan*, tho' the king was averse to *Christianity*, and seized the goods of Christians, their number in a few days amounted to three thousand [k]. On the coast of *Fishery*, during the Saint's stay, *Christianity* multiplied to that degree, that they were reckoned to be more than five hundred thousand [l], all zealous and ready to lay down their lives for the Gospel. The received opinion concerning the number converted by him, carries it to seven hundred [m] thousand. None of which countries converted by him relapsed into Idolatry, except the town of *Tolo*, and that not for a long time.

LVII. But what wonder that Catholicks alone succeed? I have said it before, and I repeat it. For *Gentils* and *Jews* to embrace Christianity on the footing of those Protestant systems or any of them, they must have lost their senses. Such a Church as they describe, so long, so early the very kingdom of Satan, could never be that of their long expected *Messiah*. A bible that is full of miracles, and has, for a thousand years and more, been lodged in the center of forgery itself, and conveyed thro' no other channel; how is it possible?

[i] The Saints life, pag. 142.

[k] Ibid. page 178.

[l] Page 567.

[m] Page 693.

possible for *Heathens*, convinced of this, to be convinced, that it contains one word of truth?

For, had not this *apostate* Church, they will say, from whence you received this Gospel, as much power and interest, in so long a course of time, to forge and impose scripture and scripture-miracles, as their own? To forge even *Heathen* testimonies in proof of such scriptures and miracles, as to convert *Heathen* nations by their forged miracles?

LVIII. And is not the testimony of our neighbouring, not long since, *Heathen* nations, might *Indian* Infidels say, now converted to this apostate Church by the preaching and miracles, as they assure us, of a Saint they call *Xavier*, more apt to convince us, that his Gospel and miracles were true, than what ever distant human testimonies can be alledged by you, for the truth of your Gospel and miracles, wrought more then seventeen hundred years ago, in countries we know so little of, and so distant from us? Wisely did our neighbours the *Parava's*, urged by the Dutch minister [n], sent expressly by the *Hollanders* from *Batavia*, to change their *Christianity* for yours, answer by the mouth of their Chief? *You must know, that altho' our Caste had embraced the Catholic Religion before the arrival of the great father (St. Xavier) in the Indies, we were only Christians in name, but Gentiles indeed. The faith which we now profess, no other way struck root in our hearts than by the power and number of miracles which our holy Apostle wrought in all places of this Caste. Wherefore, previously*

to

[n] This fact is attested in the 5th Volume of the *Recueil*, published by *Du Halde* an. MDC XXIV. p. 101.

to your talking to us about changing Religion, you must, in our presence, not only work as many miracles as the great father has wrought, but many more; since you undertake to prove to us, that the law which you bring, is better than that which he brought. Therefore begin by raising to life at least a dozen of our dead, for St. Francis Xavier raised five or six on this very coast; cure all our diseased, make our sea twice more abounding in fish than it is at present, and when you have done this, we shall see what we have to answer you. All these miracles, continue our Indian Infidels (so strongly influencing the Paravas as to withstand the preaching, and for the same cause, the persecution of their powerful lords the Hollanders) you must say, were delusive, or forged. If the first, do you put our senses to the trial of such delusion. Try to impose upon them, and make us believe you cure our sick and raise our dead: and if they are not quick enough to discover the cheat, how can we be convinced that your *bible*-miracles were not of the same nature? If forged, the same query recurs, with this conclusive one. To what end are any miracles at all, and what must your Gospel be that rests upon such a foundation?

LIX. Before we take leave of this subject, after so much and such incontestable evidence has been brought in favour of miracles wrought after the time of those, which are recorded in the sacred writings, it may not be improper to take a view of those Protestant Champions, who have disagreed in their opinions with regard to this controversy. It is needless to name all and it will be sufficient to observe on Dr. *Middleton* and his followers, and those who oppose him. Dr.

Middleton

Middleton seemed to stand by himself neither clearly a good Protestant, nor declaredly a free-thinker. He is countenanced by a number of Deists at a distance, who approve his opposition to miracles, but are not well pleased with the outside of Christianity, which he seems to keep up. This author from the end of the history of the Church left us by the inspired pen-men carries on the war against God and his Church and against the united force of all Christianity. He was supplied with stores and ammunition from the quarters of infidelity and their magazines. This enabled him to make some inconsiderable conquests among persons without Religion and ready to take any impression against a revealed Religion, which, tho' they seemed to profess exteriorly, they thought too great a burthen for libertines to bear. Could pride and ambition have been checked and known any restraint, Dr. *Middleton* met with sufficient opposition and strength of argument to have wrested his arms from his hands and made him suspect the weakness of his cause.

LX. Under these disadvantages the opposition was carried on by our hero to the ruin indeed of his cause, but not to his discouragement. Unable to meet the enemy in the field and resolved not to accept of any terms of accommodation he must have fallen a victim to his own presumption had not his superior sagacity directed him to divide those powers, which he could no longer hope to overcome. Disputes, animosities and heats had already arisen in the enemies camp, which prejudiced the cause of truth and brought over some desertors to the Doctor. It was the common interest of Christianity to humble the pride of this con-

concealed champion of infidelity, but the success of their joint forces could not be equally advantageous to all. Truth was certain of great advantages by their defeating error, but the champions were not all alike friends to truth.

LXI. The Church of *Christ* founded on unerring truth had seen some unnatural children go forth from her bosom, who could not be hearty in a service, which must prove beneficial only to her authority, which they laboured to subvert. It would have been of dangerous consequence to their cause had they continued to carry the succession of miracles down to several later centuries; they thought it enough to secure truth against the enemy during the first ages, and declined any farther researches concerning miracles equally well established in the succeeding centuries. Mr. *Z. Brooke B. D.* published a declaration against Dr. *Middleton*, whom he accuses of betraying the very citadel and fortress of Religion. He proves from the invariable word of God, that miracles must not have ceased during some ages of the Christian Church and in this he is seconded by many Protestants. That they have ceased since it was his and their interest to assert; that they have not ceased since is equally supported by the very same word of God, which Mr. *Brooke* and other Protestants employ to defeat the pretensions of a *Middleton*. Miracles according to them did not cease as soon as Dr. *Middleton* would have it; but however miracles have ceased and their cessation is pleaded by Messrs *Brooke* and Co. as a lame prop to support Protestantism tottering for want of principles. Dr. *Middleton* and those who join with him declare, that, if miracles are allowed beyond

beyond those mentioned in the sacred text, Popery gains it's cause; and the same motive determines the opposite party to reject all miracles after a period, which they are not agreed on, and which is arbitrarily fixed by many. However the Roman Catholics are obliged to Dr. *Middleton* for bringing them so early into the world, and to other Protestants, who allow they made their appearance, at least in the fourth century. And as this is grounded on facts related by authors, whose veracity is not disproved, this testimony, so prudently credited and so weakly attacked by Protestants, places the Church of God, the Church in communion with the see of Rome, in so clear a light, that even the objections of her enemies give evidence in her favour. But when did miracles cease? Why truly the gentlemen are not agreed. Mr. *Brooke* does not pretend to know, but somewhere, he imagines, between the time of *Origen* and of *Chrysostome*. How does he prove they have ceased? By those very arguments of Dr. *Middleton*, which he had just confuted.

LXII. For thus he reasons. The promises of *Jesus Christ* ascertain to the Church the power of working miracles. Therefore the Church during the first century enjoy'd that power. The argument concludes evidently against *Middleton*; but is it less conclusive against Mr. *Brooke*? *Christ* has confined the performance of his promise to no limits of time, to no bounds of ages; therefore the effect of this promise is equally extensive and unlimited. Miracles are not promised to the Church during the first century only; the words are indefinite and unconfined; and consequently it must be the height of folly and presumption in
man

man to set bounds to the divine omnipotence in the course of succeeding ages. Mr. Brooke certainly saw a consequence so clear and obvious, but it was his interest to conceal it. He affects to appear a Christian in a country, where Christianity seems to be openly professed; but he is unwilling to follow even truth for his guide, when it leads him by the light of miracles to the true Church of *Christ*, which he has demonstrated to be widely different from the Church contrived by the pretended reformers.

LXIII. I should tire my reader and myself, if I pretended to run through half the absurdities, which flow naturally from the systems of this writer. To banish miracles from the Church of *Christ* after a certain period he is obliged to entertain us with such improbable, not to say, impossible *metamorphoses* and alterations in persons as must excite the pity of every thinking and rational person. The same Church, the same men professing the same doctrines and practising the same good works are veracious and violators of truth, worthy of all credit and absolute impostors, merely because they had the happiness to live in the *third* century and the misfortune not to die before the beginning of the *fourth*. I am ashamed to mention a thousand other puerilities and gross contradictions that fall from his pen. What pity is it that truth should have no better advocates? With what face does this author complain of his fellow-labourers, whom he compliments with the glorious name of friends to Christianity, who are not ashamed to repel fraud by fraud, and to maintain that truth should not always be spoken, if he himself catches at the same weapons,

uses the same base arts, and fetters the same truth with most palpable contradictions and unpardonable dissimulation.

LXIV. But I hasten to an end and conclude what I have to say concerning these jarring systems by this one general reflexion. This controversy between Dr. *Middleton* and his opponents was from the beginning allowed by both sides to be of such importance, that on the issue of it the whole of Christianity depended. To determine a period of the miraculous powers was to put an end to the Church of *Christ* and usher in universal forgery and imposture. *Middleton* boldly fixes this important epoch at the death of the Apostles. From that moment according to this eminent divine of the Church of *England* the Church of *Christ* fell from the purity of its doctrines into every extreme of heathenish superstition and hellish practices. The Church was no more. God now withdrew that supernatural assistance, which he had promised in the most solemn manner to his Church against all the efforts of the gates of hell and the malice of its instruments, which had now prevailed and overthrown the edifice of which he had foretold and secured the continuance. The attempt was bold and indeed adequate to the importance of the question. What offence this groundless and ill-concerted scheme gave to Christians of every denomination has been set forth in the most pathetic terms by his adversaries of his own communion. They agreed with him in acknowledging the importance of this controversy ; they differ'd from him in dating the cessation of miracles and manifestly contradicted themselves. Important as it was to the
 Protel-

Protestant cause to prove that the Church in communion with *Rome* had lost the glorious prerogative of confirming her faith by miracles, the proof was scarce attempted by their divines. And the strength of their opposition lies in asserting roundly what could not be proved without contradicting the constant experience of every century and the impartial testimony of unexceptionable authors and of Protestants themselves. Miracles must have ceased, or the Catholic Church must be acquitted of those superstitions, which calumny has so long employ'd as a pretence to blind a deluded nation, and which have furnished their preachers with a fine topic for declamation. Where, when, or how miracles ceased, is of no importance to know according to these modern systems. Thus what was of the utmost consequence in the beginning of this dispute becomes to these authors in the course of the debate a matter of mere indifference. To such miserable shifts are men of the greatest abilities reduced, when abandoned to the corruption of their hearts, and interested in the blindness of their fellow-creatures.

F I N I S.

I have been asked to answer this question in some
 measure with I have had for the purpose of
 giving of continuing her faith by example, the
 good was for her and for the others. And
 the strength of their opposition lies in nothing
 really what would not be moved in their con-
 sidering the political experience of every country
 and the influence of the American of international
 conditions of the American themselves. I believe
 must have existed, or the Catholic Church will
 be subjected to the same situation, which religion
 has to long engaged as a power to shed a de-
 lighted nation, and which have remained their
 members with a fine logic for destruction.
 What, when, or how much needed, is of no
 importance to know according to their modern
 belief. This was of the utmost conse-
 quence in the beginning of the divine process
 to their subjects in the hands of the divine man-
 ner of man's existence. To look miserable things
 are men of the great, which reduced, when
 abandoned to the corruption of their hearts, and
 revealed in the hands of their fellow-citizens.

APPENDIX

TO THE

REVIEW, &c.

NOT having had leisure or opportunity to read the *Criterion*, or *Miracles examined*, &c. published in 1754, I hope the reader will not be displeased, if he is presented here with a letter from a friend containing some remarks upon that performance.

A LETTER

TO the AUTHOR of the REVIEW, &c.

Sir,

I. I am favored with yours of the 10th instant, and find that you have heard of the *Criterion*, or *Miracles examined*, &c. and of the exceptions made by the ingenious author against the miracles of S. Ignatius and S. Francis Xavier (1), which, he thinks, amount to a de-

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gree

(1) *Criterion*, or *Miracles examined*, &c. p. 69. & seq. concerning the miracles of S. Ignatius, p. 76. with regard to those of S. Francis Xavier.

gree of demonstration. 'Tis perfectly well judged in you not to undertake a particular refutation of this work; this is done to your hands by the learned Protestants, who have wrote against Dr. Middleton, all that is material or seemingly so in this performance falls to the ground by the solid rules and *criteria* assigned in your accurate review of this important question; and, besides, the judicious author of *the miraculous powers of the church of Christ*, &c. has fully confuted the sophistical rules set down in the *Criterion*.

II. But as this work is greatly esteemed and has received very great commendation in the *View of the Deistical writers* the third edition, where (2) Dr. Leland takes an opportunity to acknowledge the merit of the learned author (of the *Criterion*) and the service he has done to the christian and Protestant cause; this encomium of the *Criterion*, from that eminent writer, as a work of service to the Christian cause may surprise many Protestants, when they reflect that Dr. Middleton, whose system is espoused in this work, met with many reproaches of not being very sanguine in the cause of Christianity. But a system and the methods of defending the system may be very different; the consequences of a system derived naturally from it must be the same to every rational inquirer; but the conclusions drawn from the manner of supporting the cause may be very unlike and appear in various shapes.

Whe-

(2) *View of the Deistical Writers*, by Dr. Leland third edit. p. 371, Vol. I.

Whether in the *Criterion* the manner of arguing for Dr. *Middleton's* system screen the author from the consequences objected to the system he has adopted seems at least doubtful; and tho' the author of the view of the Deistical Writers acknowledge the service he hath done to the Christian cause, there is room for a scruple, and many may judge too much reason to fear that the *Criterion* is exposed to the consequences objected to by Dr. *Middleton's* system. And as he has been led into a gross mistake by *Peter Bayle* with regard to the miracles of S. *Ignatius* the founder of the Society of Jesus, and by as great a romancer, and another *Bayle* in point of veracity, or a very ignorant author concerning the miracles of S. *Francis Xavier* the Apostle of the Indies, some remarks upon the advantages, which those two authors pretend to have found in *Ribadeneira* and *Acosta*, may be of service to shew that our author had not so much reason as he imagined to build on the authority of the latter, and *Bayle*.

III. There is something so shocking and profane in Dr. *Middleton's* manner of supporting the cause he has undertaken, that he has raised the just indignation of all that pretend to the name of a Christian. Impiety and scurrility glare in the attack he has made against the miracles of the primitive ages, for which he has met with the severest censures from many Protestants, who have appeared with learned apologies in favor of those miracles; and even the author of the *Criterion*, tho' he says (3) *he should be*
sorry

(3) *Criterion*, p. 379.

sorry to give up to the enemies of Christianity a writer of Dr. Middleton's abilities, has disapproved his manner of proceeding in this debate. He is, he does not disown it, engaged in pretty near the same cause; and it is but a piece of justice due to his candor and impartiality with regard to Dr. Middleton to allow, that he gives up the wrong steps of this chief pleader in the cause and refuses to countenance the Doctor's excesses against piety, revelation and religion. He was aware, and not without very great reason, that such outrages were a prejudice to the cause; and that the monstrous consequences charged to the Doctor, as intimately connected with his doctrine, would not only reflect an odious light on the system they were employed to defend, but if they appeared to be clearly deduced, would overthrow the premises and demonstrate their falsehood. Hence it highly became our author to shew the difference between him and the Doctor; and it was no less prudent, than necessary, since the cause was near the same, to offer some endeavors for convincing his readers, that the consequences objected to the Doctor were not so much owing to his system, as to his method of supporting the cause, which however he rather seeks to evade than to prove.

IV. But, with a seeming view to the latter, and also to engage moderate men, he allows Dr. Middleton's *incorrectness*, not to say, *unfairness* . . . in his quotations (4); that he is as *uncandid*, as he is *satyrical* in his *disparaging representation* of the motives, which influenced the martyrs of the

(4) *Criter.* p. 397. Note (e) *q. uoisho* (E)

the primitive ages (5), that he hath justly provoked the indignation of every serious Christian by the indecent contempt with which he treateth the earliest Fathers of the Church (6); 'I think,' says he (7), 'that Dr. Middleton, if he meant to reject only the miracles since the apostolical age, while he admitted those of Jesus, which every Christian must admit, took the most obvious steps to create a suspicion, that his book was levelled equally at both. One thing is certain,' he goes on, 'that gentlemen of your persuasion' *Freetinkers* it may be supposed, 'have been furnished with weapons against Christianity from his magazine;' and lastly he grants (8) where he makes mention of his posthumous vindication of the *Free Inquiry*, that from p. 5, to p. 11. he seemeth rather to strengthen than to confute the charge which had been brought against him of having dropt hints of his allowing of no revelation besides that 'which God hath made of himself from the beginning, and placed continually

(5) Crit. p. 101. Note (a), 'It cannot be thought I go out of the way when I take notice of a remarkable instance of the incorrectness, not to say, of the unfairness of Dr. Middleton whose abilities as a writer, however admired, can never atone for those deviations from truth, with which especially in his quotations, he hath been so frequently charged.'

(6) Crit. p. 316. Note (a), 'The disparaging representation which Dr. Middleton giveth us in his *Free Inquiry*, of the views and motives, which influenced the Martyrs of the primitive ages of christianity (a representation by the bye as uncandid, as it is satyrical, &c.)'

(7) Criter. p. 395.

(8) Ibidem.

Ed 1807

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nually before our eyes in the wonderful works and beautiful fabric of this visible world (9).'

V. Not to approve the barefaced and daring manner of arguing so peculiar to Dr. Middleton was highly commendable; and to keep him company in such dirty roads was inconsistent with the profession of Christianity. However, if this author with all the respect he has for the earliest Fathers and the aversion he shews to the Doctor's impiety, be engaged in the same dangerous consequences deduced by Protestant authors from the Doctor's system; tho' he may be commended for professing himself a Christian, no allowance can be made for the incoherency, which results from the system he has adopted, and which leaves him exposed to the objections that were urged against the Doctor. Among others a grand objection was, that (10) 'by the character, which Dr. Middleton had given of the ancient Fathers, the authority of the books of the new testament will be rendered precarious and uncertain' (11). The author of the *Criterion*, tho' not guilty of the Doctor's offensive behaviour with regard to the Fathers, does not clear his favorite scheme from the same imputation, as the consequence objected is certainly contained in the scheme considered by way of premises. The credibility of the ancient Fathers, as witnesses to the tradition of the Church with respect to the sacred writings, is a motive to Protestants to receive them as di-

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(9) Pref. to the *Free Inquiry*, p. 18.

(10) Dr. Church's *Vindication* of the miraculous powers, page 291.

(11) *Free Inquiry*, p. 190.

vinely inspired. But their credit and their authority as witnesses of the tradition concerning the scriptures fails equally in the *Criterion* and the *Free Inquiry* as it may be easily observed and proved. The bold *Middleton* is not afraid of the consequence; and if his adversaries urge, that the authority of the New Testament is shaken by the character he gives of the Fathers, he very sedately answereth; *who can help it?* But the same dangerous consequence is far from being avoided in the *Criterion*; and, that the authority of the New Testament is equally uncertain and precarious is a manifest consequence of that system, tho' contrary to the author's intention; previous to the proof of which it will be convenient to examine his behaviour to the Fathers, however accompanied with marks of respect.

VI. 'If there be,' he saith, 'any superstitious conceits or weak prejudices to be met with in their works, a veil ought to be thrown over them, as these are faults not of their own, but of the times in which they lived; and which, if they disgrace the pages of the Fathers detract equally from the merits of their cotemporaries the philosophers of the *Platonic School*.'

(12) If the supposed *superstitious conceits* and *weak prejudices* of the Fathers, and the vague imputation of *Platonism*, solidly refuted by *Baltus*, do not affect their evidence for the scriptures, it naturally follows, that they cannot affect their evidence for miracles. But if they are a motive to the author of the *Criterion* to reject

(12) *Criter.* p. 394.

reject the miracles they relate, he must undertake a hard task to prove, how his *Protestant Christian* came acquainted with the authority of the Bible, what reason and what witnesses can be produced to shew, that this book is to be looked upon as divinely inspired. If he have recourse to the Catholic Church, whose authority the Protestant Christian does not admit, he will find, that these *Fathers* are an illustrious and noble part of that *collective body*, who instructed the flock committed to their care, explained that sacred *Book* which they recommended as the word of God to the faithful, and which they received as such upon the authority of those holy teachers, upon that authority, which in the *Criterion* is not sufficient to warrant the belief of a miracle. To leave the Fathers under a seeming imputation of *superstitious conceits and weak prejudices and Platonism*, as it adds no weight to their evidence in behalf of the miracles which they relate, it must in the same manner derogate to the authority of the Scriptures, which they assert; and the objection made to *Middleton* remains in force against the author of the *Criterion*, who must favour us with a good reason, why the primitive Fathers relating miracles are not to be believed, and are intitled to the character of credible, good and proper evidence for the Scriptures. The veil that is to be thrown over these blemishes, if any such in the Fathers, does no ways elude the consequence, which Dr. *Middleton* allows. Both the ingenious authors agree, that the Fathers are not sufficient evidence for the miracles related or seen by them. Whatever premises they draw

draw their conclusion from is very immaterial ; their veracity is still called in question ; their groundless credulity is supposed ; and upon this imaginary foundation their evidence is rejected with the facts, for which they are vouchers. Their veracity being set aside, and their being looked upon as persons ready to be deceived by their credulity is not only a barr to their being admitted, as witnesses to miracles, but to any fact whatsoever. Consequently their testimony, on which Protestants own, that they are moved to believe, that the books of the *New Testament* are divinely inspired, must be no motive of credibility.

VII. I said in the last number, that both those authors agreed, that the Fathers are not sufficient witnesses for the miracles they relate. This seems to need no illustration. They both reject the miracles, and of course the authority, on which they rest ; consequently both lie open to the inferences, which are made from their rejecting that authority. Dr. *Middleton* argues, that they are not to be believed on account of the character, which he impiously fastens on those lights of the Church. Our author speaks of them with more respect, but gives them as little credit. As neither has any deference to their authority in this case, Protestants must conclude, that persons, who neither deserve to be believed, nor are believed, cannot be proper witnesses to any fact, much less to that important fact of which, they before were taught, the Fathers were sufficient evidence. But is it the intrinsic credibility of miracles, or the credibility of the witnesses which gives offence
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and alarms these authors? Not the first, it is presumed, because a miracle, tho' a deviation from the common course of nature, is strictly speaking connatural to every *created being* and *second cause* from that dependency, which they have by the very institution of nature from the *first cause*, the Creator. Not the second; nor indeed in right reasoning can any exception be made against the credibility of the Fathers as witnesses. Protestants have received from them as sufficient and proper witnesses, a *book* wherein are contained mysteries, which no man can understand, far above our reach and beyond our shallow comprehension, and in the consideration of which all reason is lost and very fruitlessly employed, unless to inforce the duty and advantages of submitting our understanding to believe what God has revealed. Hence it is highly inconsistent to imagine, that a Protestant Christian shall have sufficient motives from the authority of the Fathers, as credible witnesses, to believe, that the books of the New Testament are divinely inspired, that he rationally bowes down his understanding to sublime mysteries, receives them with the greatest respect, and professes an intire and unreserved obedience to a severe and rigorous plan of morality laid down in the sacred page; and that the credibility of the same Fathers, which has the power to persuade a Protestant Christian, that unfathomable mysteries are the necessary object of his faith, and that austere and disagreeable precepts with regard to nature are to him an indispensable law, under an eternal penalty; that this credibility, I say, allowed in the

the case of revealed religion, shall not suffice for the receiving of facts which the Fathers have seen or received from good hands; facts which are easier to be understood and manifestly within the compass of nature, as dependant from God, is beyond a mystery; for it is evidently inconsistent. But of this dependency of nature I shall have occasion to speak more at large in the course of this letter, which I fear will be tedious. I must not omit another remark from this author to support the credibility of the Fathers, which he expresses in the following terms; 'tho' men may believe speculative opinions to be true, which are false, yet is it scarcely to be conceived, that they can ever so far deceive themselves as to believe they saw facts; which they did not really see' (13).

VIII. This concession of the author seems to favour the Catholics and Protestants, who plead for the continuance of the miraculous powers in the Church after the apostolical times, if the Fathers deserve any credit. Among them *S. Irenæus* is brought in for many miracles, which he asserts as wrought in his time, and which he opposes to false wonders brought about by magical illusions and impostures, which the abettors of *Simon* and *Carpocrates* and other pretenders to miracles boasted of in favour of their errors; where, by the way, we may observe the diligent guard of the Church in the earliest times against surprise, the care that was taken to detect these impostures, and which obliged them to redouble their vigilancy not to let any miracle

(13) Criter. p. 312.

miracle pass in behalf of truth that might rationally be called in question. *S. Irenæus* (14) expresses himself to the following effect. 'Moreover the followers of *Simon* and *Carpocrates*, and if there are any others, who are said to work miracles, will be convicted of not performing what they do with the power of God, nor in truth, nor to the advantage of men, but to their prejudice and to deceive them by magical illusions, and rather to hurt them by all kinds of impostures, than to benefit those, whom they seduce to believe their errors. For they can not give sight to the blind nor hearing to the deaf, nor put to flight all the devils, except those whom they have brought on, if they even do this But they are so far from raising the

(14) *S. Irenæus* Lib. II. c. 57. Edit. Erasmi. 1567, ante medium. Super hæc arguentur qui sunt à Simone & Carpocrate, & si qui alii virtutes operari dicuntur non in virtute Dei, neque in veritate, neque in beneficijs hominibus facientes ea quæ facient, sed in perniciem & errorem per magicas elusiones, & universa fraude plus lædentes, quam utilitatem præstantes his, qui credunt eis in eo quod seducunt. Nec enim cæcis possunt donare visum, neque surdis auditum, neque omnes dæmones effugare, præter eos, qui ab ipsis immittuntur si tamen & hoc faciunt. tantum absunt ab eo ut mortuum excitent, quemadmodum Dominus excitavit & apostoli per orationem, & in fraternitate sæpissimè propter aliquid necessarium, ea, quæ est in quoquo loco Ecclesia universa postulante per jejunium et supplicationem multam reversus est spiritus mortuo & donatus est homo orationibus sanctorum, ut ne quidem credant hoc in totum posse fieri, &c. What *Eusebius* has quoted in Greek from *Irenæus* shall be inserted in the marginal note to the §. x. with some remarks.

the dead, as our Lord did, and the Apostles by prayer, and frequently, among the brethren, upon a necessary occasion through the prayers of the whole church of the place with much fasting and supplication, has the spirit returned to the dead body and a man has been granted to the prayers of the Saints' (*they are so far from raising the dead*) that they even think it impossible, &c. Here real miracles are opposed to forgery, present miracles are produced against present impostures and the juggling of Heretics. Otherwise, how could *Irenæus* reproach to those Sects that they were so far from raising the dead, that they thought it impossible; when *Irenæus*, according to the *Criterion*, must have known that the power was withdrawn from the Christian Church and that the want of such power was equal on both sides? To what purpose must they be charged with not being able to raise the dead, when the others were under the same incapacity? How could he in the next chapter refer them to those, who had been raised and lived with them many years?

IX. But we are told (15) that the *drift of the argument* is to confute an opinion of some Heretics, who affirmed, that Jesus did not truly rise from the dead, but only *φαντασμάς*, in appearance, an opinion founded on the supposed impossibility of a resurrection. This is not an objection, but a mistake of this learned gentleman, whose zeal against miracles has not permitted him to give due attention to the doctrine

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(15) *Criter.* Note (a) page 376.

trine of *Irenæus*. This reverend and holy author having disputed against the heresy of *Valentinus* says, that his argument not only defeats that particular heresy, but all others; he instances in many of them and at last in the Disciples of *Simon* and *Carpocrates* and whoever else are said to work miracles, who, by the force of the argument alleged, are proved to be impostors, not to act in the power of God, but by magical illusions and frauds of all sorts, are very prejudicial to those, whom they seduce, as may be seen in the passage quoted here, which, if the *Criterion* had given it whole and intire, would not only have disproved this immaterial objection, but would have placed the parallel of the real miracles of the Church at that time and the forgeries of heretics in a fuller light and shewed the solid grounds, on which he pleaded for the continuance of miraculous powers in the church to his days, and for which he appeals to public facts and pleads his own experience. Besides *Irenæus* makes no mention in the passage before us of this objection, but pursues his argument from the said contrast of real and false miracles to the difference of their morals in this manner.

‘ When therefore error and seduction and magical illusions are impiously exposed to the sight of men, and in the Church compassion, mercy, fraternal love and truth is bestowed for the benefit of mankind not only freely and without compensation, but we also give our own to those, who want, for their welfare, they are truly convicted, and by this exterior appearance proved to be totally estranged from the divine substance and goodness and entirely fraught with

with universal deceit by apostatical inspiration and the working of the devil,' &c. Whence he leaves us room to conclude on which side truth must stand. The same subject is pursued by *Irenæus* in this next chapter; however it is true, that there (16) he prevents the objection, which, this author says, it is his mean drift to refute. We are content with the end, which *Irenæus* is pleased to tell us he proposed to himself: he does not there say, that they asserted this. But after he had mentioned the resurrection, the frequent apparitions to the Disciples and his ascension to heaven in their presence, he goes on 'if they say, that the Lord did these things in appearance, we shall demonstrate by bringing them back to the prophecies, that these things were foretold of him and most certainly done; and that he only is the Son of God, wherefore they who are his true disciples do in his name employ the grace they have received to the benefit of others. for some cast out devils others have a foreknowledge of futurity, see visions and now as I have said before the dead have been raised and lived with

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(16) *Irenæus* Lib. II. c. 58. Edit. *Erasmi*, 1567'
 Εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸν Κύριον φαντασιωδῶς τα τοιαῦτα πεποιημέναι φήσου-
 σιν, ἐπὶ τὰ προφῆτικα ἀνάγοντες αὐτοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπιδικέμεν
 πάντα ὅτως περὶ αὐτῶ προειρηθῆναι καὶ γαροῖναι βεβαίως, καὶ αὐτὸν
 μόνον, εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ. διὸ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐκείνῳ ὀνόματι οἱ ἄλ-
 λως αὐτῷ μαθηταὶ παρ' αὐτῷ λαβόντες τὴν χάριν ἐπιβλέπουσιν ἐπ'
 ἐνέργισι τῇ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνθρώπων. οἱ μὲν γὰρ
 δαίμονας ἐκδιώκουσιν οἱ δὲ καὶ προγινώσκουσιν ἔχουσι τῶν
 μαλλόντων καὶ ὀπλισίας καὶ ῥήσεις προφῆτικας· ἄλλοι δὲ τὰς κάμνους.
 τὰς διὰ τῆς τῶν χειρῶν ἐπιτίσεως ἰστανται ἡδὲ καὶ καθὼς
 ἴφαιμον καὶ νεκροὶ ἠγέρθησαν καὶ παρέμειναν σὺν ἡμῖν ἐκατοὺς ἔτησι.
Iren. ap. *Euseb.* Lib. V. c. 7.

us many years'. Before the author quotes this last passage of *Irenæus*, upon a seeming conviction, that he alone has found out the true meaning of this Father, he appeals to every one, whether in the former passage cited above there is the least hint given, that any such miracle was frequently performed in his own days (17). It is matter of no small surprize to find an author of his penetration and learning under this prevention. *Irenæus* had said that frequently among the Brethren by the prayers of the Christians the Spirit had returned to the dead body and here he adds that the *dead had been raised and had lived many years among us*.

X. Nothing can be clearer or more express; it is the plain and obvious sense; and compared with the words of *Irenæus* and the whole context and the drift of his argument gives a still greater evidence of the miracle having been frequently wrought in his time. The intent of *Irenæus* in this chapter is to convert all hereticks with regard to those particular points in which they do not communicate with *Valentinus*. But had he only undertaken to confute their heresy who denied the resurrection of our Lord, still his argument is more sensibly convincing, when, after bringing them back to the prophecies, he appeals to his and their experience of many miracles wrought before their eyes by the true Disciples of Christ, and, particularly, to the dead, whom they had raised in his name and who lived many years with them, which has been hitherto esteemed generally to be the meaning of *Irenæus*. But since he has put

(17) Crit. p. 377.

put in his appeal, I presume also to appeal to every one, whether an accurate and correct historian, as *Eusebius* is allowed to be, would have advanced a fact of that importance upon the authority of *Irenæus*, if he had not had the least hint from the text of the author. The contents prefixed to the chapter import, that miraculous powers were exerted by the faithful down to those days. *Ὡς καὶ μέχρι τῶν τότε καίρων διὰ τῶν πιστῶν δυνάμεις ἐνεργήσῃ παράδοξι.* Our adversary may not allow *Eusebius* to be the author of that title to the chapter. If he does not, he must, at least, have thanks for providing another, who witnesses, that *Eusebius* took this to be the meaning of *Irenæus*, than which indeed nothing can be more evident. But let *Eusebius* speak for himself in the body of the chapter of which he is indisputably the author, ‘In the second book of that work he (*Irenæus*) shews, that there certainly remained in his time (ὡς αὐτὸς) instances of divine and miraculous powers in some Churches.’ How does he prove this? His instance is in the raising of the dead and from that very passage, (18) which the author of the *Criterion* insists upon, and appeals to every one, whether *Irenæus* has there given the least hint of that miracle happening frequently in his own days. So great is the difference between the historian of the Church nearer to the times he describes and the author of the *Criterion* in the eighteenth century without any one voucher from antiquity. Well did it become *Eusebius* to prove that miraculous powers subsisted in the days of *Irenæus* from a

text D d 3

(18) Vid. §. ix.

text of *Irenæus* that gives not the least hint of that particular miracle being frequently performed in his own days! It was still more becoming to insist upon so stupendous a miracle, as the raising of the dead, as what had frequently happened among the brethren for a proof of his conclusion without the least intimation given by the author he quoted. But, to be serious, after *Eusebius* had produced another passage of *Irenæus*, where he says, we hear many brethren in the Church, who *have the prophetic gifts and through the spirit speak all kinds of languages* (19) he concludes this chapter very remarkably (and as if he had apprehended his meaning might possibly be mistaken) with these words 'let this suffice about the variety of charismatic gifts having continued with those that were worthy even to the times we have mentioned.' (20) *Eusebius* was a very learned man, a discerning critic, and though his style is neither agreeable, nor eloquent, yet he must be supposed to have understood his own language. He is the *earliest and best historian* of the Church (21) *who has preserved us these passages of Irenæus in the original Greek and hereby not only evinced the genuineness of them beyond all doubt, but also borne a most ample attestation to the fact, much stronger than he possibly could, had he ever so often recorded it in his own words.* On account of

(19) . . . Πολλοὶ ἀνθρώποι ἀδιφῶν ἐν τῷ ἐκκλησίᾳ παραφύσει χαρίσματα ἰχέρων καὶ παροδοπαῖς λαλοῦνται διὰ τὸ πνεῦμα ἡγουμένων. *Iren. apud Euseb. L. V. c. 7.*

(20) *Euseb. ibid.* Ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τῷ διαφορᾷς χαρισμάτων μέχρι καὶ τῶν ἀλλοτέρων χρόνων παρὰ τοῖς ἀγίοις διαμῖναι.

(21) *Dr. Church, in his Vindication, page 18.*

of his great merit in point of erudition he has gained an almost universal credit with his friends and his enemies. The Catholic and Protestant authors, who have entered the lists against Dr. *Middleton* in defence of the miraculous powers, are persuaded of their continuance in the Church on the authority of *Irenæus* conveyed to us by *Eusebius*. To him may be added all his interpreters both Catholic and Protestants, ancient and modern, who are agreed in the same, and had they not been of the same sentiments would certainly by some note or other have guarded their reader against being deceived by *Eusebius* in a point of this importance. The general acceptance of this evidence from *Irenæus* handed down by this Church-historian, the joint consent of so many authors, who understand the testimonies quoted by *Eusebius* in the same sense, must rest on solid grounds; otherwise it is not to be imagined, that among them we should find this unanimity, which must certainly be derived from an historical, a certain tradition, that these gifts continued in the days of *Irenæus* and that this continuance in his days is fully signified and imported in the passages quoted from that venerable and holy martyr. I should most notoriously wrong this well established truth, if I omitted the evidence, which Dr. *Middleton* is pleased to give in behalf of this sense of the passages mentioned from *Irenæus*. This generous enemy, fearless of consequences, and who, upon extreme and important occasions; could take up with a *Who can help it?* even, if the authority of the New Testament was, by the tendency of his argument, rendered precarious

and uncertain ; this generous enemy, I say, takes it for granted that Irenæus speaketh of the power of raising the dead as subsisting in his time (22) The words are so clear and so evidently convey this meaning, that unable to stand against his testimony, he will not deny the sense of the words but chuses to quarrel with the Saint and to question his veracity (23). Not so the author of the *Criterion* (24), who fully determined to explain away the testimony of Irenæus has at last recourse to the Greek Grammar to prove that the dead were not raised to life in the days of that Father, the answer to which difficulty I throw into the marginal note (25) not

(22) *Criter.* p. 376, in the Note.

(23) *Middleton's Inquiry*, p. 58.

(24) *Criter.* p. 377, in the Note.

(25) Previous to any remarks on the grammatical objection it may be proper to point out some inaccuracies in his first quotation from *Eusebius*. Τοῦτον δὲ ἀποδίδου τὸ παρὸν ἰγίραι καθὼς ὁ Κόριθ· ἤγειρε καὶ οἱ Ἀπόστολοι διὰ προσευχῆς καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀδελφότητι πολλοί. πολλὰ καὶ δὲ διὰ τὸ ἀταρχαῖον καὶ τῆς κατὰ τόπον ἐκκλησίας πάσης αἰτησαμένης μετὰ ἡγείας καὶ λιλανίας πολλῆς ἐπέσειν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ τίσιλευν καὶ, καὶ ἰχαιόσθι ὁ ἀδελφὸς ταῖς ἰνχαῖς τῶν ἀγίων. (a). 1. After προσευχῆς in *Stephens's* edition there is a comma, in *Valesius's* a colon. *Valesius* observes that πολλοί is redundant and makes the sense obscure and ought to be blotted out ; neither *Nicephorus* nor *Rufinus* have it, the former in Greek, the other in Latin ; nor the old interpreter of Irenæus, who says & in fraternitate sc̃pissime, 3. the punctum or full stop after πολλοί is also redundant and interrupts the sense, 4. δὲ after πολλὰ καὶ is not in any edition of *Eusebius* that I have seen and

(a) *Euseb.* L. V. Hist. c. 7.

to take up your time with the perusal of a grammatical altercation.

XI. It

if there is any foundation for the remarks made upon the *reading* in the *Criterion* δ must have been inserted on account of the *punctum* thrust in between $\omega\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota$ and $\kappa\alpha\iota$. Hence the text according to *Stephens* and *Valesius*, $\omega\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota$ being left out, would stand thus in a translation 'They are so far from raising the dead to life, as our Lord raised them and the Apostles, by prayer and *as* among the brethren very often upon a necessary occasion the whole church of a place petitionning for it with much fasting and supplication the Spirit has returned to the dead body and a man has been given back to the prayers of the saints'. As this translation with the alterations proposed is agreeable to *Nicephorus* who has given the greek passage of *Irenæus* in this manner and to the version of *Rufinus*, as also to the old interpreter of *Irenæus* as well as the judicious remarks of *Valesius*, the sense is more connatural and the period more connected; whereas in the reading followed by the *Criterion*, the latter part $\omega\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota\kappa\iota\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\alpha\iota$ seems to be a needless repetition of what was said before of *many being raised among the brethren*. Upon the whole it is not rash to conclude that this passage as given and understood by the authors just mentioned is to be read in the manner proposed and that the edition, which is followed in the *Criterion*, is faulty.

After the appeal made to every one which, without flattery, I believe every one, as well as Dr. *Middleton*, will dismiss upon the authority of this father and *Eusebius*, he goes on 'we shall see (b) farther grounds for concluding that the raising the dead is not one of the miraculous powers exercised by the Christians in his time.' (*Irenæus's*). He then quotes the passage which you will find in the Note 16 and which he translates thus
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(b) *Crit.* p. 377.

XI. It is no small prejudice against the author, that so learned a man as Dr. Middleton the cham-

‘ They who are his (Jesus’s) true Disciples do in his name confer blessings on others by a power received from him for some cast out Demons others have knowledge of futurity and see visions, others again cure the sick by imposition of hands. Besides, I have observed already, the dead *have been* raised and *have lived* many years amongst us. From this passage thus closely translated observe (*the author proceeds*) that, when *Irenæus* speaketh of the casting out Demons, of the cures of diseases and of the visions and other personal gifts of the Christians his expressions denote actions of the present time *δαίμονας ἰαίνουσι, χάριστας ἰσχύας ἐννοίας ἔχουσι*. But when he speaks of raising the dead he immediately changeth his style and sayeth *οὐκ ἐνίσταται* have been raised, not *ἐνίσταται*, which he would have used had he mentioned this power as still subsisting.’ The learned gentleman must excuse me, were it only for *Eusebius’s* sake, who understood Greek and who understood that this passage of *Irenæus* signified a power still subsisting in his days. And I must be allowed to conclude, that he cannot be sure *Irenæus* would have used the term *ἐνίσταται*, had he mentioned this power as still subsisting. I am the more inclined to hope that the author, who has translated *τοὺς δὲ ἀποθνήσκοντες τὸν νεκρὸν ἐνίσταται*, *They are so far from being able to raise the dead (the present of the infinitive) will, indulge me and Eusebius on this account; for by the rule he has laid down ἐνίσταται signifies to have raised; and his translation to keep up to his text and his rules should have been, they are so far from having raised, &c. (c)* He goes on in the argument ‘ if we turn to the Latin version of *Irenæus* the same difference of expression may be observed there, *alii dæmonas excludunt alii*

(c) Vide the beginning of the Note (25): 410 (1)

champion and leader of the *Antimiraculists* should give up the testimony of the learned and ancient

alii præscientiam *habent* futurorum & visiones alii autem laborantes aliqua infirmitate *curant* & sanos restitunt Jam etiam quemadmodum diximus, & mortui resurrexerunt & perseverent nobiscum multis annis. *Iren.* l. 2. c. lvii. (apud me c. lviii.) From all this then I think it is pretty evident, that the miracle of raising the dead is spoken of by *Irenæus* only as what had been perform'd formerly, not as what continued in his time equally with the other instances, which according to him were still subsisting in the Church. Dr. *Middleton* justly correcteth Dr. *Dodwell* for giving a present sense to *ἡγέμεθα*. But unless he himself runs into the same mistake, *Irenæus's* saying *οὐτοι ἡγέμεθα* cannot prove, that he speaks of the dead being still raised by the Christians in his own age' (d). So far this learned gentleman's seeming evidence, who being taken up with more important speculations probably did not attend to the first elements of a language he otherwise appears to understand perfectly. The possibility of a mistake is a caution against hasty and preremptory decisions which, I presume, is the case here. For I am persuaded no Greek School-master is convinced by the grammar rules, that the author has proved the intent. He in effect thinks his assertion pretty evident; by the rules of the Westminster grammar it is uncertain, whether *ἡγέμεθα* signifies they were raised a *little*, or a *long time before*. The innocent supposition that *Eusebius* understood Greek, was a learned man, and took the sense of his author, is a strong exception to this evidence; and the common consent of grammarians, that the Greek *indefinites* import also a time *not long past* and sometimes even the *present* makes it certain beyond all doubt, that the words of *Irenæus* may import the sense given them by *Eusebius* (e).

(d) *Crit.* p. 377 marginal Note.

(e) The Westminster Greek Grammar published 1689,
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cient father *Irenæus* as very clear against his system. But, besides what has been observed before

I presume, under the direction of that most celebrated Grammarian Dr. *Bushy* master of that school gives this account of the *aorists* or *indefinite* Tenses, p. 35. 'Indefinita sunt tempora incertæ significationis, sumuntur enim pro præteritis omnibus & interdum pro Præf. & Fut. & cum sumuntur pro præterito, incertum est an paulò ante vel multò ante res præterierit,' Hence *ἠγάθησαν* may signify by the Grammar rules that the dead were raised in *Irenæus's* days; and that *Irenæus* was generally understood in this sense, we are warranted by *Eusebius*, who otherwise would not have so positively asserted this fact if it had been contested.

But as it is critically observed by our author, when he speaks of other powers, he says the expressions denote a *present* time. It is allowed; but he must at the same time grant, that this expression, which denotes the present, signifies a time that is *past*, that is, that Demons *have been* cast out, that the sick *have been* cured by the imposition of hands, unless we suppose, that *Irenæus* wrote at the very instant that these wonders were done. But then our author will say, why do his expressions denote in one case the *present* and in the other a *past* time? To this the usage of the Greek language will be the best answer. The authors, who have wrote, express themselves promiscuously, and often use the *indefinite* for the *present* and with the *present*. An infinity of examples may be produced. I will give an instance in *Isocrates* printed at Cambridge 1686 and translated by *Wolffius* a Protestant. Ἐπειδὴ δ' οἱ λόγοι τῶν αὐτῶν ἔχουσιν τὴν φύσιν ὥσθ' ὁμοίᾳ εἶναι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πολλὰ ἁπλῶς ἐξηγήσασθαι, καὶ τὰ τι μεγάλα ταπεινὰ ποιῆσαι καὶ τοῖς μικροῖς μέγαδ' προσθεῖναι. *Quum autem ea sit natura Sæmonis, ut res eadem variè possint explicari, dicendoque cum magna deprimi, tum exaggerari parva.* Where all the indefinites evidently denote the present time ἐξηγήσασθαι, ποιῆσαι, προσθεῖναι, *Isocr.* *Panegygr.* 105. To instance again, in the Oration to Demonicus p. 48, the indefinite stands for the *present* and the present in the same place retains its own signification. Κάλλος μὲν γὰρ ἢ χρεὶν ἀνάλωσιν, ἢ πόσος ἔμαρται. πλοῦτος δὲ, κακίας μᾶλλον ἢ καλοκαγαθίας ὑπερέτης ἐστίν.

fore, this is not the only point about which these two authors are divided. The *Criterion* in some respects goes beyond the *Inquiry*. The author strikes into a new road, as yet unpractised and untried, in which it is believed very few *Christian* adventurers will chuse to make their appearance. The expedient is well calculated for Dr. *Middleton*'s system and that elegant writer would no doubt have adopted it, could he have reconciled it to true philosophy. But instead of that (26) he makes an important concession, and after having complained, that 'all his antagonists

iv. *Nam forma quidem aut ætate consumitur, aut morbo deflorescit; divitiæ verò vitiorum magis quam virtutis ministræ sunt.* From what has been said it is not clear that Dr. *Dodwell* stands justly corrected for giving a present sense to *ἡγεδίστα*; it is very reconcileable to the text of *Theophrastus* and to the rules of grammar. But whatever right Dr. *Middleton* might plead to correct his antagonist he has certainly disclaimed all pretences to give another meaning, than what *Eusebius* has given to the words of *Irenæus*. As the author of the *Criterion* has taken great pains to give us his laboured explication of *Irenæus*; and as he looks on this part of his work to be momentous in this controversy, he will see with pleasure that it has not been handled as a trifle, that a due regard has been shewn to every part of his argument; and that nothing has been omitted, which could serve to place in a true light the reasons we have to dissent from a person of his learning and erudition. Due notice must also be taken of his candor and sincerity in owning, that *Irenæus* thought the other gifts mentioned by him subsisted in his days among the Christians; but he must be pleased to excuse us from being persuaded, that he has offered any thing sufficient to disqualify that illustrious Martyr and learned father from being a proper and credible witness of what he assures us happened in his own age.

(26) Vindication of the *Free Inquiry*, p. 32--33.

gonists treat *his* argument, as if it absolutely rejected every thing of a miraculous kind, whether wrought within the Church by the agency of men or on any other occasion by the immediate hand of God', he goes on thus. 'that God can work miracles whenever he pleases, nobody, I dare say, will deny. But whether he has wrought any or not since the days of the Apostles, is an inquiry, which I do not at all enter into. The single point, which I maintain, is that the Church has no standing power to work any.' How consistent this is with the *Inquiry* let others judge; this however might have sufficed to drop his virulent and sarcastic reflexions on the Fathers, his charge against them of *credulity, superstition, strong prejudices, enthusiastic zeal in favour not only of Christianity in general, but of every particular doctrine, which a wild imagination could ingraft on it and their scrupling no art or means, by which they could propagate their principles* (27). And here I take leave of Dr. Middleton to follow the *Criterion* in his new plan of instruction for the Protestant, where he seems to insinuate that God, except the case of a new revelation, cannot enable men to work miracles, which is a point absolutely indefensible.

XII. He first lays down this supposition, 'if in a matter of this kind human reason can arrive at any certainty, there seemeth sufficient foundation for asserting, that God will never vest men with our miracles, unless such power be vested in them for this ONE END to satisfy the

(27) Pref. to the *Free Inquiry*, p. 31.

the world that they are really under a supernatural influence and are to be looked upon as teachers from heaven,' (28) or 'as he explains his meaning (29) a little after 'Teachers of a new revelation of the will of God'. This was intended to *conclude that the age of Christian miracles ceased with the age of Christian inspiration* (30). As the conclusion is arbitrary, the author must have a better opinion of his Catholic and Protestant adversaries, than to imagine that, upon his begging the question, they will put it to that issue and give up the point in debate. To return to his supposition of a *certainty* to be had in *matters of this kind*; to suppose what is very uncertain, you may say, what is certainly false, cannot be a solid foundation of any argument. To suppose, that in a matter of this kind human reason can arrive at any certainty is very precarious, it is groundless; and to conceive, that human reason can by itself penetrate into the secrets of God is a dangerous pretumption. For if the Apostle is to be believed (31) *what man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.* Hence nothing can lead us even to suspect, that human reason can arrive at any certainty in those things, which are a secret to us and wholly depend upon the will of God. He is not guided by our reason. How shall we by our weak reason arrive with any certainty

at

(28) *Crit.* p. 355.

(29) *Crit.* p. 357.

(30) *Crit.* p. 391.

(31) *Cor.* I, 2, c. ii. v.

at the motives, which direct his providence? His views and his designs, are impenetrable; they lie far out of the reach of our weak comprehension. On the contrary it may be justly asserted, that, without a revelation, we cannot know what he will do; we cannot determine, whether he will or will not vest men with a power of working miracles; and unless we are assured, that his vesting such power in men implies a contradiction, no one can decide, that he will not vest this power in men. What we can only know by a particular revelation we must despair of knowing by human reason; and consequently it is evident, that, in a matter of this kind, human reason cannot arrive at any certainty. Whence, as weak reason cannot arrive at any certain knowledge, it may be evidently inferred, that there neither seems, nor is there a sufficient foundation to say, that God will not vest such power in men, the case of a new revelation excepted.

XIII. A pretence of an argument is offered in the *Criterion* from the Scriptures and from reason to shew, that God will not vest miraculous powers in men except in the case he has mentioned. The Scriptures are far from proving his assertion, and the reasons he alleges prove too much. The sacred page was not thought to contain any such intimation of the will of God, before the learned author without referring the reader to any part of the sacred books insinuated it in the following manner, 'The Scriptures tell us (32) what reason
also

(32) *Criter.* p. 360.

also doth dictate, that *miracles are signs to those who believe not, not to those who believe*. One may venture to say, that this is no proof from Scripture. The passage in question is not found in the original Greek of the N. T., nor the *vulgate* interpreter, nor any Protestant version of the Bible. The text, to which this mistake comes the nearest, is presumed to be what is read in the Apostle, (33) *Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not*. This inaccuracy, or slip of the pen, or mistake of the Printer seems to coincide with the precarious assertion. For, if miracles are not for a sign to believers, they may be judged unnecessary; and this would be a colourable pretext for advancing, that they were only employed to support the teachers of a new revelation, for which the text given in the *Criterion* seems not to be calculated amiss. Far be it from me to imagine, that the learned author would lay profane hands on the sacred page and offer this violence to the word of God! This would be a criminal liberty indeed! And I own myself persuaded, that it is only an oversight, a lapse of memory, a mere inadvertency, for which perhaps the zeal he shews for the system he has espoused may also plead an excuse. The text quoted from the Apostle leaves no room for the argument founded on that *unscriptural* passage; and there can be no hazard in denying his inference. The rules of discourse do not conclude from *particulars* to *generals*; if Peter

(33) 1 Cor. 14, 22.

is blind, you have no reason to say, that all men are so; if this particular miracle is not a sign for believers, what reason have we to determine, that others are no signs for believers; in a word, if *tongues* are not a sign for them that believe, how does it follow, that all other miracles are only and equally signs for them that believe not? Unless all miracles be comprehended under that of *tongues*, which they certainly are not, the author's argument is illogical and the consequence unconnected with the premises.

XIV. However, the connatural sense of this text seems to be, that *tongues* are chiefly a sign for them that believe not. When this gift was first communicated on the day of Pentecost to the faithful assembled by themselves they *were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues* (34) *as the spirit gave them utterance*. The first exerting of this gift was among the Apostles and believers; and before *this was noised abroad* (35). For then, i. e. *when this was noised abroad the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak his own language* (36). Cornelius the Centurion and those that were with him at *Cesarea* believed in Christ, whom S. Peter preached to them, before the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them (37). *While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them* *which*

(34) *Acts* ii. 4.

(35) *Ibid.* v. 6.

(36) *Ibid.*

(37) *Ibid.* x. 44-5-6.

which heard the word, and they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

The gift of tongues was not communicated to *Cornelius* and those with him before they believed; and the miraculous power was exerted here only among believers. Another instance, where believers only met, may be made.

(38) *S. Paul came to Ephesus and finding certain Disciples he said unto them have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, and he said unto them, unto what then were you baptized? And they said unto John's baptism. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied.*

Not to be tedious, the 14th chapter of the first to the *Corinthians*, whence the text is taken to support this objection, shews evidently, that this gift was employed, where only believers were assembled, which will appear from the bare perusal. I do not at all apprehend, that the author will plead, that this gift was natural in those assemblies and only a miracle, when they that believed not heard the Apostles and others exert that power. Lastly it is very agreeable to the sacred page to say, that this (39) text does not regard unbelievers in general, but the *Jews*

(38) Ibid. 1-2-3-6.

(39) 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

of whom *Isaiah* quoted by the Apostle, speaks in the preceding verse *with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto these people, and yet for all that will not hear me* (40), which manifestly points out the *Jews*, who would not believe, tho' they saw that oracle accomplished by the gift of tongues miraculously residing in the Apostles, and others under the particular influence of the Holy Ghost.

XV. It does not appear from what has been said, that the *Criterion* has proved from the Scriptures what the author intended; and it must remain unproved, unless the reasons he offers for the support of his assertion are of more weight, than what he must have by mistake, imagined to be contained in the sacred writings. Before I enter upon the argument, by which he disposes the reader to admit, that God will not vest men with the power of working miracles for any *other end*, than to teach a new revelation, it is to be observed that he speaks of the *invisible agency of God* in a manner something unintelligible. 'All this' says he (41) 'may be effected by God's invisible agency, or (which is the same thing) by the invisible agency of those superior beings, whom God intrusteth with the care of the world; without calling in the invisible agency of men and vesting them with power to *perform the events*.' Tho' this may not be thought to regard the point in debate, it is wrong to suppose that, in God, to act by his invisible agency or by the invisible agency of Angels, for example, is the same thing.

(40) *Isaiah*, xxviii. 11.

(41) *Crit.* p. 356.

thing. God's invisible agency may be by his own immediate operation, or by Angels as his instruments. The instrument certainly is different from God, who employs it; and if it be the same, whether he act with or without an instrument, the controversy is at an end. For tho' God is ever the same, whether he act with or without an instrument, in the same method of arguing, when God did wonders and wrought miracles by his Apostles, it was no more, than if he had not employed them as instruments in the miraculous effects; and their operation could add nothing to the invisible agency of God, which in the case proposed was the same, as if God had made use of no instrument. Nor can this author be admitted to say, that the difference arises from the *visibility* of the instrument on one side, and the *invisibility* on the other. This indeed makes a difference with regard to us, but not in the thing itself, because if it be the same to act with or without an *invisible* instrument, it is the same to act with or without a *visible* instrument; for either case is reducible to this, that to act with or without an instrument is the same; and the visibility or invisibility makes no difference in the main point. He had given his reader to understand (42) that 'the laws established in the universe or in other words, the course of nature may be altered either by God's invisible agency, or by the visible agency of men made use of as his instruments in doing this, and vested with powers to this purpose'.

(42) Ibid. p. 354.

He might have added, that the same laws may be altered at the instance and request of men applying for these extraordinary events to his almighty power, in which there is not the least shadow of contradiction; particularly, since God has by promise, engaged his miraculous interposition in behalf of those, who shall ask and pray with a pious confidence, that their prayers shall be heard (43). But the author had his private reasons for suppressing what favours so much the cause of a Catholic Christian and defeats the impossibility which he aims to assert of working miracles. 'Now' the author goes on, 'tho' we may be certain that God will reverse the course of nature, but for important ends (the course of nature being the plan of government laid down for himself) infinite wisdom may see ends highly worthy of a miraculous interposition, the importance of which may lie hid from our shallow comprehension. Were therefore the miracles about the credibility of which we now dispute, events brought about by invisible agency' (What ill consequence would there be if some miracles were brought about by the visible agency of men?) 'tho' our being able to discover an important

(43) Luke ii. v. 22. And Jesus answering saith unto them, have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you that whosoever shall say to this mountain be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things that he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you what things soever you desire when you pray, believe that ye receive *them* and ye shall have *them*.

portant end served by a miracle would be no weak, additional motive to our believing it, our not being able to discover any such end could be no motive to induce us to reject it' (44) The argument is evidently the same, and not less consequent, but general, when comprehending both the *invisible* and *visible* instrumental agency, of which the latter in these cases is always attended by the former, when God is pleased to work those wonderful effects, wherein he is ever the principal agent. Now it is incumbent on the author of the *Criterion* to shew the contradiction that would insue, the inconveniencies that would result from miracles wrought by the instrumental agency of men; and to prove that miracles wrought by men are derogatory to the power, liberty and other attributes of God. For tho' our shallow comprehension cannot discover any important immediate end, yet the end, which God proposes in all things we must allow to be important, he being the ultimate end, who *has made all things for himself* (45) and never acts but for a proper end.

XVI. A miracle, whether performed by the sole invisible agency of God, or by *that* principally with the *instrumental* agency of men or Angels is an effect out of, or beside the order, or common course of nature, but no more implies a contradiction, than the miracles owned to be wrought by the Apostles or others, as

(44) Crit. p. 354.

(45) Prov. xvi. p. 4.

instruments of the Deity. This is too evident to require a proof; and the contradiction, on which the pretended impossibility of miracles seems to rest must arise from some limitation grounded upon the immediate end, for which they can be wrought. This is the tendency of the plea brought by our author against the possibility of miracles, the case of a *new revelation* excepted, for which this ingenious writer seems not only to prepare us, but to lay us under a necessity of discarding the old. 'Now' 'says he', we cannot suppose, that God would make use of men as his instruments in reversing the laws of nature, when the ends of his miraculous interposition could be effected by his own immediate operation. For the same arguments, by which we discover the wisdom of the Deity lead us to this conclusion, that in his operations he will always act in the most simple and regular way, without making use of unnecessary, superfluous means' (46). This argument is fraught with dangerous consequences, too dangerous to be allowed by a Christian, who seriously reflects on the conclusion, which is naturally the result of such premises and which moreover destroys his own *Thesis* and the possibility of miracles to support either a *new* or the *old Revelation*. For if we cannot suppose, that God would make use of men, as his instruments in reversing the laws of nature, when the ends of his miraculous interposition can be effected by his own immediate operation, we cannot, we must not suppose, that he made use of his

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Apostles and others in reversing the laws of nature. Miracles in this supposition are unnecessary, superfluous means, nay they are impossible. It is certain, it is undoubted and beyond all question, that God could by his own immediate operation effect the conversion of the world and bring about our obedience to the law he revealed without any miracle, without ever reversing the laws of nature. Again, if we cannot suppose, that God would make use of men as his instruments, when his own immediate operation was sufficient, it follows from the same ruinous principle, that God never vested a power in men to work miracles; that miracles wrought by men vested with power to that effect are unnecessary, superfluous means, derogatory to his supreme power able of itself to execute his decrees by his immediate operation, which leads us to this unhappy conclusion, that the sacred books, relating those events are not to be credited, and at once overthrows revelation and religion.

XVII. A miracle, strictly speaking, is not against the laws of nature; but with respect to God, is a natural event, and only miraculous with regard to us, as being a deviation from the common course of nature, or contrary to what we know of nature, and is called by us a *supernatural* event, not as it is a deviation from the common course of of nature, but as it is an effect, which can only be caused by a power superior to all secondary causes. The author of the *Criterion* calls a miracle *reversing the laws of nature* and the laws of nature *the common course of nature*. It is ungenerous to cavil about terms.

The

The best construction must be put upon them that they can bear. S. *Augustin*, who is here quoted only as a philosopher, expresses himself in the same manner and thus explains his meaning. 'It is not improper to say that God acts against nature, when he acts contrary to nature, when he acts contrary to what we know of nature. For the usual and known course of nature we also call nature, contrary to which when God acts, his actions are called *magnalia & mirabilia* i. e. wonderful and marvellous works' in the language of the Scriptures. 'But as to the chief and principal law of nature unknown to the ungodly and those, who are yet weak, he is as sure not to against it, as he is sure not to act against himself' (47). There is undoubtedly a law of nature, which we discover in the very notion of a Deity, which, because he is God, he has not the power to reverse. As the first cause of all created beings, he cannot create any being independent of his supreme power and *essentially* not subject to his free will and disposal. Another law is a consequence and an explication of the former; by this he can, in rigour and speaking with the utmost precision, act in no way against nature. For if a created being depend

(47) Aug. Sed contra naturam non incongruè dicimus aliquid Deum facere quod facit contra id quod novimus in natura. Hanc enim etiam appellamus naturam cognitum nobis solitumque cnsursum naturæ contra quem cum Deus aliquid facit, magnalia vel mirabilia nominantur. Contra illam verò summam naturæ legem a notitia remotam sive impiorum sive adhuc infirmorum, tam Deus nullo modo facit, quam contra seipsum non facit. Lib. XXVI. c. 3 contra Faust. Manich.

essentially from the Creator, whatever he does is not against nature but agreeable to that essential dependency of nature created and subject to his power. This order and dependance from the author of nature is universal; and against that he can no more act, than he can act against himself. If he did, he would act against his *prescience*, or his will, or his goodness. The connexion between secondary causes and their effects or in other words the course of nature can lay no restraint on God; he is not subject to it, but that to him. And this course proceeds from him, as a free cause, by the free disposition of his will, whereby, if he pleased, he might have instituted another course of nature and that more or less perfect, which he is still at liberty to do. The course of nature far from binding his power leaves him the exercise of that liberty, which is an essential prerogative of the Godhead, and which nothing can reconcile with a subordination of the Deity to the connexion of secondary causes and their effects. In this sense all that he does or can do with regard to created beings stands exactly well with nature and the *working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself* (48). And to this effect S. *Augustin* says, that *the Creator and author of all natures does nothing against nature: For that shall be natural to every thing, which he shall do* (49). This seeming digression will not be thought altogether foreign

(48) Philip. c. iii. 21.

(49) Deus autem creator & conditor omnium naturarum nihil contra naturam facit: id enim erit cuique rei naturale quod ille fecerit, & Aug. Lib. XXVI. contra Faust. Manich. c. 3. paulò ante medium.

foreign to this subject, when it is observed that *Spinoza* has formed an argument against the possibility of miracles upon this wretched equivocation of the *laws of nature*. The laws of nature, says this shadow of a philosopher, are necessary decrees of God : but he being immutable, cannot change his decrees ; from which he concludes the impossibility of miracles. What has been said concerning the laws of nature demonstrates the weakness of the Paralogism. If he mean the fundamental laws of nature by which its dependance is established, that law is irreversible. If he mean the course of nature, that is not *necessary*, but *alterable*, and the free disposal of created beings is fixed by the former. The immutability of God does not affect his liberty. He is immutable, not so the course of nature ; created things are subject to alterations, the Creator is not ; and where there is not a deviation from the usual order among secondary causes, nothing strictly speaking is or can be done against nature, which evidently appears from the nature of the Deity, from which the fundamental law, and essential dependency of created beings is evinced.

XVIII. To return to the *Criterion*, it must be allowed, that the author speaks a different language from *Spinoza*. He has granted against the latter (50) * that the laws established in the universe, or in other words the course of nature may be altered either by Gods invisible *agency* or by the *visible agency* of men made use of as his instruments in doing this and vested with

with powers to this purpose'. But unluckily the tendency of his discourse leads to the point asserted by *Spinoza*. The argument on each side concludes the impossibility of miracles. The *Criterion* lies open to inconsistencies clearly deduced from his argument; and *Spinoza* is not ashamed to advance a monstrous error for the support of his tenet. His error is not to be defended, but it does not appear, how it is avoided by the other. To say that the laws of nature are immutable decrees of God is an error even in philosophy; but to restrain the infinite power of God in any one case is to dispute the infinitude of that power, and to pull down with one hand the power you establish with the other. *Spinoza's* argument fixes one error, by supposing another; the impossibility of miracles, by supposing that God is not at liberty to deviate from the laws of nature. 'Now we cannot suppose,' says the *Criterion* (51), 'that God would make use of men as his instruments in reversing the laws of nature, when the ends of his miraculous interposition could be effected by his own immediate operation.' But the end, viz. the establishing a new revelation, for which it is supposed, that God made use of his miraculous interposition by the Apostles and others as his instruments, could be effected by his own immediate operation without his miraculous interposition. Therefore we cannot suppose that God would make use of men as his instruments for reversing the laws of nature to establish the new revelation. The first proposition is the learned

(51) Crit. p. 356.

learned author's. The second, without a great mistake is too clear to need any illustration. There is not the least appearance of contradiction in saying, that God can by himself reveal many secrets of the Deity, enact new laws, declare his will by himself without any deviation from, or reversal of, the laws of nature, dispose their minds, to whom he makes the revelation and prepare them with persuasive illustrations to believe with certainty, that *he speaks* and consequently, that what *he reveals* is true. It lies on this author to shew the contradiction. The power of God is too stubborn an attribute not to be infinite, and it is a received and a certain rule both with the *philosopher* and *the divine*, that all that is possible to God, which implies no contradiction. This gives a great advantage over the ingenious champion of the new *system*, which, could it be supported, would in his hands be invincible. As it is; it evidently follows from his concession and a very clear proposition, that God could not vest miraculous powers in men where he could obtain the effect by his own immediate operation; and consequently that he never did vest such powers in men.

We are told in the *Criterion*, that the only end, which could ever render it *fit*, (52) that men should be vested with a miraculous power, is to confirm the truth of a character, which they (the Apostles, &c.) assumed *that of being teachers of a new revelation of the will of God*. This appears a little inaccurate. The end, which

which can make it proper in this case that they should be vested with a miraculous power is strictly speaking to confirm the new revelation, which they were enjoined to publish. The last verse of that last chapter of *S. Mark* supports this way of thinking. *And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following.* God, the Apostles and others his instruments are a *complex cause*; and the *effect* or the *end* intended is the establishing the new revelation, for which purpose they were vested with miraculous powers. When God designs to make use of an instrument for the bringing about an effect, the effect is properly the end proposed, tho' when he intends the effect, he also intends that the instrument shall be fit and duely qualified. But as the qualities of the instrument are circumstances of the instrumental cause, it is concluded he must mean the confirming of the new revelation, as the *only end*, which could render it *fit*, that men should be vested with a miraculous power.

But (without disputing farther whether this is a proper expression) where God makes use of an instrument in reversing the laws of nature, this instrument is raised to be the instrumental cause of an effect, which exceeds the power of all created nature; or else the effect would not be miraculous. The author allows, that *the superior beings, whom God entrusteth with the care of the world*, may be instruments in his hands, and in that quality cause all other effects, which he can propose to serve by miracles. Are the effects which God can propose to serve by miracles

racles within the sphere of activity natural to those superior beings? In that case the effects are not miraculous. If they are not, and the effect exceed all created power, the instrument must be raised to be a partial inferior cause of an effect above all secondary causes. Is the power of an Angel so far above the power of man, as to be a reason, why this superior being can be an instrument in the hands of God for obtaining this effect, and the inferior being, man, cannot be such an instrument? What is above the power of created nature is equally impossible to men and Angels. Whether they are considered as visible, or invisible beings, there is no difference that can arise as to the possibility of the effects. It lies therefore on the subtle author to shew, why God can use those superior beings as instrumental causes of effects above the power of all created beings, and what makes it unfit, one case excepted, that is, in reality, impossible to make use of men as his instruments for effects of the same nature. As to men, the impossibility of their being in all cases the instruments of his almighty and infinite power does not seem to be so evident; and therefore it is justly required of this author, while we believe, as Christians, that the Apostles and others were instrumental causes with God of miraculous events and vested with power to that effect, it is I say, but just to insist upon his proving the inconsistency of a miraculous power given to man in any case. Are the laws of nature unalterable? *Spinoza* is for the affirmative, but the *Criterion* seems to divide against him, 'The

laws established in the universe' we find (53)
 ' or, in other words, the course of nature may
 be altered by God's invisible agency, (where be
 pleased to remember that God's *invisible agency* or
 the *invisible instrumental agency* of superior be-
 ings, to whom he entrusteth the care of the
 world, is the same thing with this author)
 ' or by the visible agency of men made use
 of as his instruments.' But if in one case he
 may employ the instrumentality of human agents,
 he must in an other be tied down by a sort of fa-
 tality, and want that infinite liberty to do what,
 and in what manner, he pleases; or he wants
 power to do it. In either case he is stript of
 divine perfections. *Spinoza* would insist on the
 impossibility of miracles wrought by the *visible*
agency of men; he would say, that, if his power
 did not extend to all cases, it extended to none,
 from which he would infer *his* unalterable laws
 and immutable decrees. But if he wants power
 to effect that, which does not appear impossible,
 his want of power in one case leads men to
 conclude, that he wants it in all. Is Protestan-
 tism of that flimsy inconsistent texture, that it
 cannot stand, if God and his infinite perfections
 subsist? The learned Protestants, who have,
 with great erudition, maintained the continu-
 ance of miraculous powers in the first centuries
 and indeed, the generality of Protestants are
 not of this eminent writer's opinion, who has
 gone beyond the great champion of this cause
 Dr. *Middleton* and hit upon a secret, which by what
 has been mentioned from his *Vindication* (54)

F f would

- (53) Crit. p. 356.
 (54) *Vindication of the Free Inquiry*, p. 32---33
 quoted here, §. XI.

would never have been adopted by the Doctor; a new discovery in this controversy, which limits the power of God; a pretence to an argument, which, by proving too much, proves nothing.

To sum up this objection in one point of view, the author first supposes, that if in a matter of this kind human reason can arrive at any certainty there seems a sufficient foundation for asserting, that God will never vest men with miraculous powers unless for one end. Next, he sily and subtilely insinuates, that every other end, which God can propose to serve by miracles (wrought by men as his instruments) may be effected by the invisible agency of God, or the invisible agency of superior beings, that is, by an invisible instrumental agency. He then proceeds in a manner, to say the least of it, something ungenerous, for having made a supposition on his side, he will not allow his adversaries to make another. 'We cannot,' as is quoted above, 'suppose, that God would make use of men as his instruments in reversing the laws of nature, when the ends of his miraculous interposition could be effected by his own immediate operation.' (55) And here he throws out a hint, that miracles are *unnecessary, superfluous means*, because the Deity will *act in the most simple and regular way*. By this *legerdemain*, every other end, which God could propose to himself, cannot be effected by miracles wrought with the *instrumentality of human agents*, and *one only end* remains, which could render it fit, that men should be vested with miraculous powers. The sum of the answer to the whole of this mighty objection is that this

Divine

(55) Criter. p. 356.

Divine and Philosopher in either capacity can not arrive at any certainty in a matter of this kind without a revelation, nor any natural evidence without a demonstrative proof, that it is impossible such powers should be vested in *human agents*. It is indeed true, that those ends may be effected by the *invisible agency* of God, or the *invisible agency of superior beings*, as his instruments; but this is not a sufficient exception against the *visible agency* of men, as his instruments; because if God can make use of *superior beings* as instruments, even, when the end proposed can be effected by *his own immediate operation*, one must be master of more than common acuteness to discover a reason, why God cannot make use of a man, as his instrument, where the effect intended is equally impossible to the invisible, and visible, created being. Little does it avail this subtle writer to add, that 'the same arguments (56) by which, we are enabled to discover the wisdom of the Deity, lead us to this conclusion, that in his operations he will act in the most simple and regular way without making use of unnecessary superfluous means'. If by the most *simple and regular way* he means acting without an instrument, the conclusion is certainly false and contrary both to reason and religion. God undoubtedly can act *with* or *without an instrument*; and the *Criterion* allows, that the Apostles and others were instruments vested with miraculous powers. But if their instrumentality did not derogate to the simplicity and regularity of the divine operations, why should the instrumentality of other human agents? If their instrumentality did derogate to

F f 2

(56) Criter. p. 356.

that simplicity and regularity as it must, since, God was able to effect the ends he proposed by his own immediate operation, then it follows from the *Criterion* that the miracles of the Apostles and others were not only unnecessary, superfluous, but impossible means. By all which it appears fully proved from the *Criterion*, that even the *only end, which could render it fit* to vest men with miraculous powers, is really *no end*, that can *render it fit*; and that his laboured endeavours to establish his new doctrine have only served to shew, that he has abetted a ruinous system. The proof he offered from Scripture was a mistake; that, which he offers from reason, is another, and engages the author in a palpable contradiction.

XIX. I shall not take up your time with the rules in the *Criterion* to discern true from counterfeit miracles. You have laid down in your excellent performance exact and judicious *Criteria* to that effect, and shewn from the earliest times the constant care and diligence of the Church in guarding against all surprise from imposture. The author of the *Miraculous powers*, &c. in his short observations on this work has refuted these rules with great perspicuity and equal strength of reason, and gives the following judgment of the piece. 'In a word (57) the whole work appears to be not a sincere inquiry after truth, but a trial of skill to display all the arguments, which art and sophistry can supply against the truth; and will serve to justify all the *Jews* and *Pagans* as well as Protestants in their rejection of miracles.'

As
(57) *Miraculous powers*, of the church of Christ, &c.
p. 59.

As the *Criterion* singles out the miracles of *S. Ignatius* and *S. Francis Xavier* for clear instances of forgery and fraud in the Church of *Rome*, it may not be improper to take some notice of the exceptions against the miracles of *S. Ignatius*, for which he owns himself principally indebted to *Bayle* (58). And I am persuaded that his deference to that famous author, and whoever has led him into a mistake concerning *S. Francis Xavier* has been his motive for adopting their fallacious objections. To refute *Bayle* and what he brings from the other will sufficiently shew that this grateful author is very little indebted to either for the reinforcements from that side for the support of his system.

Bayle according to the character, which that most eloquent Minister *Mr. Saurin* gives him 'was (59) a great sophist who undertook to confound truth with falshood, and knew how to draw false inferences from the principles he supposed. On the one hand a man of learning and knowledge, who had read all that can be read and remembered all that can be remembered; on the other hand ignorant or at least feigning to be so with regard to the most common things; proposing such difficulties as had been a thousand times answered; and urging objections, which a school-boy could not make without blushing.' This unfortunate man died with his arms in his hands, writing against the learned Minister *Mr. Jaquelot* a defence of the most odious things he had advanced with respect to atheism and impiety. Among numberless evident instances of his little regard to

F f 3 truth,

(58) *Crit.* p. 75--76 Note (b).

(59) *Classical Dictionary verba Bayle.*

truth, which it is unnecessary to alledge, let this glaring falshood suffice. According to the doctrine of *the Church of Rome* (60), *there is no article of faith without a decission of the Church.* Bayle is dead, but the abettors of his doctrine are desired to inform the learned world, by what council the unity of God, the trinity of persons and many others were decided. This, by the bye, which with what has been said is only premised to shew, that a person, who took such daring liberties with truth, might employ that base sophistry, whereof he was so noted a master, and of which his deceitful attack against the miracles of S. *Ignatius* is not the least convincing proof.

He begins with a specimen of his juggling verbo *Loyola* (*Ignatius* of) and informs us in this manner 'The author I cite (*Ribadeneira*) having sincerely owned (61) that S. *Ignatius* had not the gift of miracles, and having anticipated the objections, which might have been made from that quarter was doubtless told privately, that he had gone too great lengths and that it was not prudent to own such particulars in a public manner.' Observe here, that no author is quoted, no name of any person, who spoke to *Ribadeneira* to this purpose. Honest Bayle insinuates this as *doubtless*, and satisfied with the impression this would make seemingly drops what he had positively asserted and modestly goes on thus 'Be that as it will, he retracted in a new book and related a great number of miracles of the founder of his order.'

Bayle, a man of universal reading had undoubt-

(60) Bayle Critique querales, Lett. XXIX. N. 2.

(61) Dict. Hist. & Crit. verbo *Loyola*.

doubtedly read the Council of *Trent* and could not be a stranger to a law enforced by a decree of that synod, a law which was derived from the practice of former ages and of which there are instances in some councils. This famous assembly, how much soever disliked by the abettors of Protestantism, which it condemned published a decree (62) of this tenor. 'The holy synod decrees. . . . also that no new miracles or new relicks shall be allowed without the previous examen and approbation of the said Bishop, who, when he is arrived at a certainty concerning them, may with the advice of Divines and other pious persons, do what he shall judge agreeable to truth and piety.' This is the ecclesiastical law, which *Bayle* is pleased to dissemble and out of respect to which *Ribadeneira* neither did, nor would mention any miracles. He was not at liberty to publish what was forbidden by so great authority, till the facts had not only undergone a strict examination, but also received the approbation of the ordinary. In answer to this poor sorry contrivance of *Bayle* it suffices to say, that he finds fault with *Ribadeneira* for observing ecclesiastical laws and paying a due obedience to the supreme authority, that resided in that august assembly with the visible chief of the Church at their head. Those, who are not unacquainted with

F f 4 the

(62) C. Trid. Sess. 25, Decr. de invoc: & vener: &c. circa finem statuit sancta synodus. . . . nulla etiam admittenda esse nova miracula nec novas reliquias recipiendas nisi eodem recognoscante & approbante Episcopo qui simul atque de iis aliquid comfertum habuerit adhibitis in consilium Theologis & piis piis viris ea faciat quæ veritati & pietati consentanea judicaverit.

the character of *Bayle* may trace the sophist, or cavilling disputant, in every argument he has offered against religion and truth. All that have heard of *Ribadeneira* must know, that candor, piety and a religious deference to the holy ordinances of the Church were very remarkable in that good man.' 'But,' *Ribadeneira* makes this objection to himself (63) 'if these things are true, which they certainly are, why is not his sanctity evidenced by miracles.' Tho' many miracles might be well attested at that time, yet not having the sanction of proper judges, or he not knowing, that they had this sanction, they could not be alledged or published. Had he published such miracles tho' in all appearance well supported by witnesses without the approbation required, he would have violated the laws of the Church, whereof the observance was ever dear and sacred to him, and from which his respect to superiors would never suffer him to depart. Whence it appears, that the answer to the objection he anticipated was proper and apposite. He knew no miracles which had the approbation required to make them public. They might be certain, well attested, and rest upon informations made by the order of the Bishops in their respective Diocesses, and yet till those ordinaries had approved those miracles they could not be made public. If he published his life, no miracles could be inserted, but what were not only certain, but approved, unless *Ribadeneira* is to be supposed both inconsistent and irreligious enough, to take upon him the shame of publishing what he was forbid to do, by breaking a wise precept, and injunction of the Church.

(63) *Bayle* L. c. or the *Criter.* L. c. p. 70.

Church. For however the credibility of witnesses and their depositions upon oath may be a motive to a Bishop for authorizing the publication of a miracle, this was no warrant to *Ribadeneira* for publishing miracles not approved by the respective ordinaries in the Bishopricks where they were said to happen.

As *Bayle* has left many heirs of his insincerity and those weak quibbles which make up the bulk of that superior knowledge boasted by Deists, another objection which they may start is proper to be taken into consideration. Miracles, you say, were not to be published by *Ribadeneira* without the authentication your Church requires. How happens it, that this scrupulous author mentions his prophecies and other, as you stile them, supernatural favours? The reason is that as the Scriptures for which the Deists have no regard, but are a respectable rule to Christians, as the Scriptures, I say, make a distinction between prophecy, as well as other *charismatic gifts*, and miracles called *divine*; and as ecclesiastical decrees are understood in a rigorous sense the prohibition of relating miracles was not thought then to extend to other gifts; and afterwards *Urban VIII*, who had forbid the publishing not only of miracles but prophecies, &c. on the 13th of *March* 1625, was pleased on the 5th of *June* 1631, to modify the restraint, provided the author protested at the beginning of his work, that he did not by any thing advanced in that way challenge any credit or authority from the Church of *Rome*.

It is true *Ribadeneira* said in the edition published the year 1572 and that of 1587 ' that miracles

miracles were so far from being wanting to add any lustre to the life of *Ignatius*, that he was of opinion that many and those very great miracles appeared in the clearest light. . . . For whether we view the beginnings of this society or the institute, or its propagation and the wonderful advantages that ensued, we shall not be at a loss for miracles, whereby God is pleased to shew that this work is his and declares the nature of the root by the body of the tree and its fruit.' (64) But the same author in the short life of *S. Ignatius* of the year 1604 which he published in *Spanish* and was also given in Latin by *Quartemont* at *Ypres*, in 1612, to which edition *Bayle* refers, delivers himself as follows 'Whereas in the last chapter of the 5th book' (of the life of *S. Ignatius*) 'we spoke in few words concerning his miracles, as if none were wrought, or as if they were not necessary to prove his sanctity, I now intend to relate more at large, not all (for that would carry us too great a length) but part of those, which God has vouchsafed to work by his servant. For tho', when I first published his life in latin, I knew of some *other* miracles' (he had mentioned the gift of prophecy and other supernatural gifts which were not the object of the prohibition decreed by the council of Trent) 'I did not think those so sufficiently verified as to authorize my laying them before the public, which afterwards in the authentic informations received for his canonization were proved by credible witnesses. And indeed God, who is pleased to exalt and glorify him on earth, honours him daily with so many miracles *that I think it my duty to* publish' (64) *Bayle*, Ibid 65 & 66.

publish some of them, &c. Here Bayle stops with a qualm of conscience and has a scruple of giving us the whole translation of the latin passage he recites from the translator of Ribadeneira, who had said *ut mearum partium esse ducam literis hic mandare non nulla ex publicis actionibus sumpta*. His modesty and tenderness for his cobweb of an argument made him use the disguise of an &c. not to let the public know from his translation that the miracles were taken out of *public deeds or instruments*. Had he done this, he certainly had acted an honest part. But had he given us what Ribadeneira in the Spanish original goes on with in the same place; ‘*I thought it, says he, my duty to publish them taken from the original authentic and judicial informations which several prelates have made and (which originals) are in my hands and the depositions upon oath of the very persons on whom the miracles were wrought and the testimony of other persons of credit (65), had he given us, I say, this whole passage, he would have behaved more like a generous adversary; and perhaps the author of the Criterion would not have been so much indebted to Bayle.*

Not to rob Bayle of any part of the sophistry, which he slurr’s on his readers, he goes on and by way of an important discovery, he adds that

Riba-

(65) Que me obliga à referir alguna parte dellos aqui sacados de las mismas informaciones autènticas y juridicas, que muchos Prelados han hecho y estan en mi poder y de las deposiciones que con juramento tambien han hecho las mismas personas, en quien se hizieron los milagros y por el testimonio de otras personas fidedignas. Ribaden: in the Spanish life of S. Ignatius printed 1604 and the same with that done into Latin and printed at Ypres 1612.

Ribadeneira in his preface to the edition 1587 says, ' I judged it necessary to make many additions. First of some particulars, which most grave persons very familiar with *Ignatius* and his intimate acquaintance before the foundation of the society related to me, as eye-witnesses concerning *Ignatius*, and in the next place some other things of which I doubted and which I found afterwards upon a diligent inquiry to be certain. Upon this he observes acutely and very properly, that as no miracles are mentioned, they are not the additions he judged proper to make in the year 1587 to which I readily subscribe with *Bayle*, but suppose he would insinuate, that no miracles had been wrought in the interval of the two editions and if he only mean that no miracles were wrought which ecclesiastical authority would warrant to be published it will be little to his purpose and nothing against *Ribadeneira*. We allow that this writer sought most carefully the certainty of the miracles of his founder. Let it be supposed for the present. He neither had means nor power to set informations, processes, examinations on foot; he could not take depositions upon oath from any person and tho' all this had been done, still he wanted authority to declare any miracle authentic. Would a Jesuit, *Bayle* goes on. confess his author wrought no miracles? He certainly could not publish that he had not wrought any. But, to answer this captious by a fair question, did *Ribadeneira* confess that S. *Ignatius* wrought no miracles? This confession does not appear from the text and the amount of his answer to this query, why his sanctity is not attested by miracles, is that supposing there were none they

they were not necessary. What miraculous facts he knew, tho' they might be evident to him, he was not at liberty to publish. And this undoubtedly is the connatural sense in which *Ribadeneira* is to be understood, who gives the want of authentication as a reason for his silence with regard to the miracles, which he knew in 1572, and which miracles were upon full evidence afterwards declared authentic and of which he had the original informations with the depositions upon oath of the persons on whom the miracles were wrought. Among these he relates, upon this irresistible evidence, a miracle wrought on a young person cured of the king's evil the first of *August* 1556, the day after his death, on which his remains were deposited in the Church of the Society. The known character of *Ribadeneira* requires this construction to be put upon his account of the miracles, and the insincerity and fraud with which *Bayle* asperges this no less pious and good man than elegant and learned writer, must fall to the sophist's share and remain a clear instance of his captious and deceitful cavils.

It may seem strange that so much should be thought necessary to oppose to a system of infidelity advanced by an author who has long and justly been treated with the utmost scorn and contempt by the learned world. But the Protestant author of the *Criterion* having found it necessary in his attack upon miracles to draw his ammunition from this suspected quarter, it is hoped we shall be allowed to pursue him in his retreat and cut off those supplies, which tho' unequal to the pressing exigencies of a desperate enemy may yet be of service to his cause in the hands

hands of designing men, who may either want opportunities or inclination to declare openly in his favour. *Bayle's* argument when stated in the strongest light will stand thus. If *S. Ignatius* had wrought any miracles, they would certainly have been mentioned by *Ribadeneira*. None are mentioned by him. From these premises if allowed to be true the conclusion must be good against miracles. But unfortunately for this witty and unfair *infidel* they are not true and contain only a mixture of equivocal language and fashionable raillery. If he means that *Ribadeneira* would have published the miracles wrought by *S. Ignatius* and approved by ecclesiastical authority the proposition is certainly true, but as it has been observed above, certainly useless to the caviller and his friend the author of the *Criterion*. Because it will hardly be denied, that miracles may be wrought, which never receive the sanction of Church authority, which must necessarily follow the working of those it approves. If he means to assert that *Ribadeneira* would have published all the miracles said, or privately believed to have been wrought by *S. Ignatius* I should be glad to know what grounds this author has for so bold an assertion. *Ribadeneira's* character both as a man and an author is out of the reach of such random marksmen. But it is not my business, neither indeed is this a place to vindicate the historian of *S. Ignatius* from the indirect aspersions of the enemies of Saints and of the Church the mother of Saints. Let it suffice to say, that if an uncommon sense of religion, which was a shining part of his character, had not made him respect every decision of the Church, at least common sense

sense and self-love would naturally have prevented his flying in the face of her pastors by an open act of disobedience. This *Jesuit* might be very fond of the founder of his order, his intimate friend and acquaintance; he might be very zealous for the honour of a society, of which he himself was a distinguished member; he might earnestly desire to spread the reputation of the one and serve the interest of the other by his pen; and yet he must be very unwilling to transgress the bounds prescribed by so respectable an authority as that of the H. Council of *Trent*, by advancing what he had not authentic records to support. Nay, without pretending to any extraordinary share of sense, I think it very clear, that such facts if advanced must necessarily hurt the reputation and the interest they were designed to serve. Not only one falsehood, one imposture, but even one true miraculous event related in this life, without being properly authenticated, would have disgraced the new Saint and his credulous or designing Biographer. But *Bayle* enforces his argument by another evidence given by *Ribadeneira* himself. Not only *Ribadeneira* mentions no miracles of *S. Ignatius*, but he asserts, or, at least, he grants that no such miracles had been wrought. The same ambiguity lurking here as in the other passage renders his conclusion equally fallacious and groundless. In a word this cavil only serves to shew the exact care and attention of the Church in not admitting any miracle but what has undergone the strictest examination, after which no greater obligation lies upon any one to give greater credit to such accounts, than what rational motives suggest to
inforce

inforce a human belief of facts well attested and declared credible by so great authority.

XXX. Thus far about the imposture and weak cavil which *Bayle* has obtruded upon the world and the author of the *Criterion*, who is not the only Protestant that infamous sophist has led into an error. You have sufficiently vindicated the miracles of *S. Francis Xavier* than which, I may venture to say, and you have proved, none are better attested. The mistakes, which the *Criterion* has adopted from another *Bayle* or a person most grossly mistaken, and which the author is pleased to put off with an air of demonstration are very palpable, but as he imagines they form an argument, they deserve at least a short notice to be taken of them. And thus the author introduces his counterfeit detection.

‘ Before any credit be given to the miracles of *Xavier* we must be satisfied, that they were publickly known during the time intervening from his death. But so far is this from being the case, that we can produce what I look upon as most conclusive evidence, that during that time *Xavier*’s had not been heard of. The evidence I shall alledge is *Acosta*, who himself had been a missionary among the *Indians*. His work *de procuranda Indorum salute* was published in the year 1589. And in it we find an express acknowledgement, that no miracles had ever been performed by missionaries among the *Indians*. For he assigneth it as one reason why the gospel was not propagated by them with the same success as it was by the Apostles.’

‘ That the power of working miracles did not
subsist

subsist among the missionaries (66).’ Here we are told first that *Acosta* expressly acknowledges, that no miracles had ever been performed by the missionaries among the *Indians*; and that the same author declares, that the power of working miracles did not subsist among *them*. But so far is this from being the case, that *Acosta* expressly acknowledges miracles performed by missionaries among the *Indians*, and no where says, that the power of working miracles did not subsist among them. This, when clearly proved, will take off a great part of the *conclusive evidence*, which the author of the *Criterion* has suffered to be passed upon him by the insincere or ignorant writer, upon whom he has depended for a pretended detection of *Xavier’s* miracles. This fallacious objection rests upon the *supposed acknowledgement* of *Acosta*, and a wrong translation of that author. *Acosta* is quoted, as if he asserted in that place, that *the power of working miracles did not subsist among missionaries*, but this is really imposing upon *Acosta* what he did not say; and what is inconsistent with the subject matter of the discourse. *Acosta* says, indeed, that ‘another reason on our side, why the apostolical preaching of the Gospel cannot entirely be done after the apostolical manner, is that there is no plenty of the miracles, which the Apostles wrought frequently *facultas miraculorum quæ Apostoli plurima perpetrabant* (67).’ *Cicero’s* authority for *facultas* being taken in this sense is very

G g suffi-

(66) Crit. p. 77.

(67) Altera causa in nobis est cur Apostolica prædicatio institui omnino non possit Apostolicè, quod miraculorum nulla facultas sit, quæ Apostoli plurima perpetrabant. *Acosta* de procur. Ind. Sal. L. II. c. viii.

sufficient (68) and the drift of the discourse renders it necessary, that *Acosta* may not contradict himself, nor reason inconsequently. The two next chapters, the ninth and tenth are taken up in accounting for the *fewness* of miracles. In the beginning of the *ninth* he sets out with observing, that many inquire and wonder not without reason, why that multitude of miracles *miraculorum illa vis*, which Christ promised to *his*, is not seen at these times. Again he speaks in this manner. *But*, says he in the same chapter, *that there should be so great a scarcity of signs, when the necessity of them is so great, is a just cause of much trouble* (69). He then expatiates with piety as well as erudition in pointing out several reasons, which may be the motives of providence for that *rareness* of those wonderful effects. The same subject is treated and continued in the tenth chapter, where a farther reason is assigned and is expressed thus in the summary prefixed, *That the scarcity of miracles is also in some part owing to want of merit in the preachers* (70). Whence it is sufficiently made out that the author of the *Criterion* has been surprised by a wrong translation of *Acosta*, for tho' *Facultas* may signify *power*, that sense cannot be *Acosta's* who would not have taken needless pains to account

(68) *Cooper's Dictionary Facultas pro Copia Cic.* abundance, *Store. Nuinmorum facultas Cic.* Store or plenty of money.

(69) *Miraculorum illa vis non cernatur.*
Verum cur tanta signorum parcitas sit cum videatur tam esse effusa necessitas, meritò cruciat animum. Acost.
Ibid L. II. c. ix.

(70) *Quod etiam exiguò merito prædicatorum, signorum parcitas aliqua ex parte attribuenda sit. Acost.*
Ibid. c. x.

count for the scarcity of miracles, when he had, as is supposed by this author, absolutely disclaimed all power whatever; *quod miraculorum facultas nulla sit*. And this may be justly urged against the *Criterion*, where the pretence to deny *miraculous powers* rests on the denial of miraculous facts after a certain period and *vice versa*.

And now to shew, that *Acosta* expressly acknowledges, that miracles had been performed by the missionaries among the *Indians* what he says in the last quoted chapter well deserves the attention of the author of the *Criterion*. 'I really make no doubt' says *Acosta*, 'that if the ancient faith of our predecessors, their godliness and fervour should again make their appearance, we should also become spectators of their former works. Let us take a view of a person of this age the blessed master *Francis* a man of apostolical life of whom so many and so great signs are related by many and those credible witnesses that more or greater are not related of any besides the Apostles. What shall we say of master *Gaspar* and of others, not few, of our society? How great is the glory and praise given to the divine magnificence by their wonderful works in converting new nations, which is also evidently seen in persons of other religious orders and is not altogether unusual in our West-Indies (71).' A farther evidence and express

G g 2 acknow-

(71) Equidem non dubito si illa priorum prisca fides, si pietas spiritûsque fervor ille rediret quin prisca etiam opera spectaturi essemus. Convertamus oculos in nostri sæculi hominem B. Magistrum Franciscum, virum Apostolicæ vitæ, cujus tot & tam magna signa referuntur, per plurimos eosque idoneos testes ut vix de alio exceptis Apostolis plura aut majora legantur. Quid
M. Gas

acknowledgement from *Acosta* of miracles being performed by missionaries among the *Indians* is read in these remarkable words 'it would be too long to enumerate the gifts of the Spirit, the signs and miracles which in the preaching of the Gospel have appeared publicly both in the *East* and *West Indies* even at this time, that charity is grown so cool (72)'. This bears hard upon the author, who has deceived the writer of the *Criterion* and persuades any thinking person, that this last gentleman has never read *Acosta*, but has been surprised by defective and incorrect extracts. It happens unluckily that the very author and the book pitched upon to shew that the miracles of *Xavier* were not heard of between the time of his death and the publishing of *Acosta's* work, should in that same work make the honourable mention, which appears in this passage, of that holy man and his miracles. If the author of the *Criterion* pretend, that *Acosta* contradicts himself, this answer will shew, that *the evidence which he alleges is not what he can look upon as conclusive evidence, that during that time Xavier's miracles had not been heard of.* It will be hard to reconcile this learned author's reading and comparing the
lives

M. Gaspar alique socii non pauci in India orientali, quantam divinæ magnificentiæ laudem novis convertendis populis operibus admirabilibus pepererunt? Quod in aliis sacrorum ordinum viris perspectum etiam est & in nostra quoque occidentali India non est omnino inusitatum. *Acosta de proc. Ind. Sal. L. II. c. x.*

(72) Et quidem dona Spiritus signa & miracula, quæ fidei prædicatione immotuerunt his etiam temporibus quando charitas usque adeo refrixit enumerare longum esset tum in Orientali illa India, tum in hac occidentali, *Acosta de proc. Ind. Sal. L. I. c. 6.*

lives of Xavier written by *Tursellinus* and *Boubours*, unless an allowance be made for want of attention to an early date of a letter concerning the *miracles of Xavier*. The letter is referred to by *Boubours* and is preserved in *Tursellinus* and was published in *Emmanuel Acoſta* the Portuguese Jeſuit's volume *rerum in oriente geſtarum* printed at *Dillingen* in 1571, and at *Paris* 1572. A transcript may not be disagreeable, and it is of this tenor from John III. King of *Portugal* to *Don Frਾਂciſco Bārreto* Viceroy of the *Indies*.

‘ Well beloved Viceroy, I the King ſend you greeting.’

‘ The life and labours of *Francis Xavier* have been of ſo good example, that we think it will be moſt agreeable to God to have them published to his divine glory and praiſe. Wherefore that they may, when made public, have proper authority and credit with all perſons, We ſtrictly enjoin you that in all places of the *Indies*, where there ſhall be a probability of finding ſufficient and credible witneſſes of things in this kind (that is ſuch as have known and been acquainted and converſant with *Francis*) you do procure authentic inſtruments and depositions upon oath of the witneſſes, to be regularly drawn up not only concerning his life and manners and all things done commendably by him for the ſalvation and example of men, but alſo concerning *the miracles, which he has wrought both living and dead*. You ſhall ſend by three different ways theſe authentic inſtruments with all the evidences and proofs ſigned with your handwriting and ſealed with the ſeal of your ring. If you do this with great care and expedition, it will

will be extremely agreeable to ME. *Lisbon*
28 *March* M. D. LVI. (73).'

Had this ingenious writer read attentively the first chapter in the sixth book of *Xavier's* life written by *Turfellinus*, where this letter is recited, he would not have been so hasty in deciding, that his miracles were not thought on till some forty years after his decease. The date of the King's letter and the context of *Turfellinus* shew, that they were mentioned in Europe, before the king sent orders to the Viceroy for the taking of informations thereon. Besides which I take it, that the author of the *Criterion* must indulge the Catholic Christian so far, as to help him out with an answer to his own objection. For, if *Xavier's* life being written forty years after his decease, tho' collected from materials bearing early dates, is a just exception to the miracles

(73) Prorex amice, tibi ego Rex salutem plurimam. Francisci Xaverii vita ac labores exempli aded salutaris extiterunt ut Deo gratissimum fore existimemus, si ea ad divinam gloriam laudemque proferantur in lucem. Quocirca aut illa in vulgus edita quam par est apud omnes auctoritatem habeant ac fidem magnopere tibi mandamus, ut usquequaque in India, ubicumque locupletes atque idonei hujusmodi rerum testes esse videbuntur (qui scilicet cum Francisco usum consuetudinemque habuerint) tabulas publicas ac testificationes, testibus jurejurando adactis, rite conficiendas quàm diligentissimè cures cùm de vita ejus ac moribus, de que rebus omnibus ab eo ad hominum salutem & exemplum laudabiliter gestis, tum verò de iis quæ divinitus ille & vivus patravit & mortuus. Eas tabulas simul cum testimoniis auctoritatibusque omnibus tuo chirographo subscriptas, annuloque obsignatas triplici ad nos transmittes viâ. Hoc sedulo & celeriter si feceris magnam à nobis inieris gratiam. Olysi pone V. Kalend. Apr. M. D. LVI. *Turfellin. Lib. VI. vitæ S. Franc. Xaverii c. 1.*

miracles related therein, S. *John's* writing the Gospel of our B. Lord sixty years after his death must be an objection, more demonstrative by twenty years, against the resuscitation of *Lazarus*, the transubstantiation of water into wine in *Cana of Galilee*, and those other miracles which are only found in that holy Evangelist. Moreover *Turfellinus* would have acquainted this author, that *Xavier's* miracles were taken from the authentic informations sent into Europe pursuant to his Majesty's orders. By the Bull of his canonization we learn, that the Bishops of the *Indies* discharged this great duty with the greatest diligence. The orders from the king were executed with the utmost precaution and all the care that a matter of that important nature required. Nothing can be imagined more accurate, or where greater circumspection appears, to guard against surprise and to proceed on assured grounds. *Bartoli*, *Bouhours* and *Pardies* shew from the acts of his canonization, out of which the above-mentioned Bull recites the miracles resting on the informations from the *Indies*, that public officers were chosen from among the clergy and laity, men of worth and of great understanding and abilities; that they repaired to the places, took depositions upon oath from eyewitnesses to the miracles, examined the deponents with the greatest rigour and exactitude after the strictest search and inquiry made into their characters, as credible persons; that the whole was registered, sealed with the seal of commission, signed and sealed by the Viceroy and dispatched to *Portugal*. From these authentic memoirs contained in the original sent by the Viceroy and, then in the Jesuits hands, *Turfellinus* relates the miracles he has
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published in the life of S. *Xavier*, which are grounded upon such clear authority and evidence that no history (that, in the sacred writings, excepted) is more authentic, more certain, or stands upon a better foundation. But I beg pardon, I have inadvertently broke in upon a subject which you have treated with so much dignity and weight of argument, that the truth of *Xavier's* miracles appears in the clearest light. It was sufficient for me to shew, that the learned author's argument from *Tursellinus* did not amount to a proof that his miracles were not thought on for forty years; but that on the contrary it is evident from *Tursellinus*, that they were heard of long before. And therefore I beg leave to make an end; I congratulate with you on the judicious and learned performance with which you oblige the literary world; and I am

Sir,

Your most humble Servant.

April 28, 1758.

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